ACADEMIC ADVISING AND TUTORING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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PUBLISHED IN: Frontiers in Education

frontiers Research Topics

frontiers

ISSN 1664-8714
ISBN 978-2-88966-496-2
DOI 10.3389/978-2-88966-496-2

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ACADEMIC ADVISING AND TUTORING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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Citation: McIntosh, E. A., Troxel, W. G., Grey, D., Van Den Wijngaard, O., Thomas, L., eds. (2021). Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Perspectives. Lausanne: Frontiers Media SA. doi: 10.3389/978-2-88966-496-2

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frontiers in Education

EDITORIAL
published: 29 January 2021
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.631265

Editorial: Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Approaches

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Keywords: academic advising, personal tutoring in higher education, student success, student transition, student support

Editorial on the Research Topic

Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Approaches

Research in advising and tutoring in Higher Education (HE) is mostly focused on the US context and, although this literature is widely available, it lacks a systematic, logical path to discovery and access (Troxel et al., 2021). This research topic is aligned with a content analysis of global advising literature, led by Dr. Wendy Troxel at NACADA, which will help to address this issue and identify new avenues of enquiry, focusing in particular on strengthening the evidence-base for advising practice. In an international context, we believe advising and tutoring to be of great importance and, in that regard, global research will help to build a credible evidence base for our practice and to acknowledge the centrality of high quality advising and tutoring to teaching, learning and student success. The promotion of personalized, even individualized, learning is now at the heart of most HE institutional missions, and many universities are currently reviewing their strategic and operational tutoring infrastructure (Lochtie et al., 2018; Thomas, 2012, Thomas, 2017). Indeed, agendas align worldwide to both expand and diversify HE and there is a global focus on understanding the factors that drive student persistence, student outcomes and employability, as well as the context of the role within HE. Personal tutoring has been proven to play a pivotal role creating a bridge between individual students and large and potentially anonymous institutions (Thomas and Hixenbaugh, 2006; Thomas, 2017). In the wake of the Covid19 pandemic, these personal connections need to be emphasized and it is vital that we continue to address known disparities in HE, improve access and participation and redress the marginalization of certain student groups and identities within institutions and disciplines. We believe that effectively tackling these issues will require strategic, connected, purposeful and effective ways of working across recognized institutional and international boundaries.

This significant shift in the national and international learning, teaching and student experience cannot be addressed without due regard to the strategic placement of advising and tutoring within universities, in a bid to continuously improve HE learning cultures. Moreover, approaches will increasingly have to understand the challenges and opportunities afforded to us by online instruction and the realization of the blended model of learning and teaching. Recently, Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education was published (Lochtie et al., 2018), promoting a more evidence-based approach to advising and tutoring practice and situating it within the wider, international literature

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *19 November 2020*
Accepted: *11 January 2021*
Published: *29 January 2021*

Citation:
McIntosh EA, Thomas L, Troxel WG, van den Wijngaard O and Grey D (2021) Editorial: Academic Advising and Tutoring for Student Success in Higher Education: International Approaches. Front. Educ. 6:631265. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.631265

on student retention and success. Additionally, two academic journals have long focused on scholarship related to academic advising (the *NACADA Journal* and *The Mentor*), though until fairly recently the audience has been primary focused within the United States of America (USA).

The range of venues for publishing advising scholarship is increasing. Nevertheless, there are still many gaps in our knowledge and many fruitful avenues for future research in this area, all of which can help to acknowledge and articulate the ongoing importance of advising and tutoring to fostering independence of thought and enthusiasm for lifelong learning. It is our intention, in coordinating this collection of articles, to bring together global scholarship on advising and connecting its varied themes. We can learn much by embracing international approaches to research and best practice in advising, and we must also do more to understand the impact of COVID19 on educational experiences and outcomes. An ongoing content analysis project undertaken by the NACADA Center for Research at Kansas State University outlines the themes and trends in advising and tutoring research and identifies emerging issues and avenues for enquiry in this important area. Most notably, the number of articles related to the use of technology in advising and tutoring was rising before COVID19 forced widespread use of synchronous and asynchronous online education.

The aim of this collection of articles is to further stimulate discussion in this field, whilst considering some of the most pressing gaps in the current literature, promoting further international research in this area and connecting several disparate HE policymaking agendas. The collection highlights the impact of high-quality advising and tutoring practices and is intent on advancing evidence that advising and tutoring are fundamental to helping universities achieve their strategic ambitions for student success. This final collection features 14 articles, edited by 5 guest associate editors and 44 manuscript authors. The articles span United States, United Kingdom, UAE, Australian and European advising and tutoring contexts. Many of the articles reflect the successful partnerships established by a number of organisations invested in the development of international approaches to advising and tutoring. This includes NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), LVSA, the Dutch national association of academic advisors and the John N Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education**.**

This collection addresses several broad themes within the area of advising and tutoring. The collection brings to life all the ways in which advising and tutoring impacts student success more broadly, aligning approaches with student voice and partnership and co-design principles. Dominant themes within the collection reflect recent research and practice and include: 1) the consideration of skills and competencies of advisors, professional standards, and the design and development of digital training resources, 2) the impact of advising on student engagement, student voice, partnership and student transition, 3) the application of various tools and techniques in advising and tutoring practice, 4) the impact of advising and tutoring on attainment, mental health and student wellbeing, and 5) the use of technology, learning analytics and online spaces in advising and tutoring. All of these themes address how advising can help tackle known disparities in HE, improve access and participation and redress the marginalization of certain student groups. In that regard, this collection of articles will doubtless help inform future research enquiry focused on the impact of advising and tutoring on specific groups of vulnerable students in HE.

Within the theme of skills, competencies and professional standards, McGill et al. (Kansas State University, United States, The American University of Sharjah UAE and the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom) discuss the skills and competencies for effective academic advising and personal tutoring. Their article reflects approaches across three international advising and tutoring contexts and examines evidence of professional values, professional skills, professional behaviors, and training and continuing professional education and development. This article aligns with Walker's (Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom) research article which considers the development and implementation of the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring. Continuing the theme of development for advisors, Woods' article (University of Warwick, United Kingdom) extends the evidence for professional skills, competencies, and standards by considering the development and design of an interactive digital training resource for personal tutors. This paper outlines the context of the training's development, and the pedagogic approaches, methods and principles that informed the learning design. Millard (Abertay University, United Kingdom) and Janjua's (Birmingham City University, United Kingdom) Policy and Practice Review considers the role of other stakeholders in advising, examining the role of Student Success Advisors (SSAs) as a targeted and specific aspect of support and advising for students that focuses upon student transition and the first-year experience (Millard and Janjua).

Within the theme of the impact of advising on student engagement, student voice, partnership and student transition, Yale (Edge Hill University, United Kingdom) considers the application of the psychological contract in advising. This research article examines the usefulness of psychological contract theory to explore the student-personal tutor relationship from the student perspective. The findings reveal the vital role the personal tutor has in the making, shaping, and negotiating of the student's psychological contract, which goes beyond the bounds of that specific relationship to the contract students have with the institution. Similarly, Raby's (University of Lincoln, United Kingdom) report considers the student voice in personal tutoring, examining students' own perspectives of the advising and tutoring process, intended to inform enhancements to the process. Goldspink and Engward's (Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom) article continues the analysis of staff student partnership by revisiting the tutorial as academic care. They present a phenomenological study of distance learning students, providing transferable insights about the immediate and lasting impact of the tutorial relationship. Continuing with this theme of student voice and partnership in advising, Mann's

(University of Melbourne, Australia) article focusses on the co-creation and co-design of advising services, and examines how these systems can be built to address the central challenge of supporting learning outcomes, improving the student experience, and enhancing the acquisition of employability skills. Finally, Partington's (Kingston University, United Kingdom) conceptual analysis furthers our understanding of the student-advisor relationship and considers the development of personal tutoring as a key aspect of learner-centric pedagogy, in response to the changing profile of HE students, especially in terms of social and cultural capital.

Within the broad themes of the application of various tools and techniques in advising and tutoring practice and the emerging field of learner analytics, Lowes' (Plymouth University, United Kingdom) article examines the use of the Johari Window and the application of learning analytics. The article complements Yale's use of the psychological contract in advising, and argues that learning analytics systems have the potential to facilitate communication and sharing of information, and thus enhance the quality of communication between personal tutors and their tutees to improve student engagement and support the tutee. Learning analytics are also a strong feature of Ahern's (University College London, United Kingdom) article, which investigates the alignment of learning analytics and student wellbeing in the United Kingdom, providing data for advisors to identify changes in students' behaviour. Similarly, Holland et al. (Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom) study explores the extent of the relationship between advising and attainment and offers an institutional case study focused on the topic. Finally, McIntosh et al. (Middlesex University, London, United Kingdom, The Ohio State University, United States and UK Advising and Tutoring) Perspectives piece brings the collection together by considering learning analytics from a flipped advising standpoint, examining the concept of the "third space" (Bhabba, 1994; Gutierrez 2008) and extending the concept of advisor-student partnership. The "Third Space" is not just a physical space, rather a term used to define spaces where hybrid identifications are possible and where cultural transformations can happen.

Whilst this special collection of articles presents a variety of contemporary research agendas and perspectives in the field of advising and tutoring, we will continue this work into the future building on the knowledge and investigating further avenues of scholarly enquiry. Indeed, a collaborative approach to the identification and development of critical questions, support for research, dissemination of, and access to, this emerging body of scholarship is necessary. Discussions are underway to create an international repository of scholarship related to academic advising and personal tutoring. This database will further encourage scholars, practitioners, and decision-makers to situate this complex field within an established, growing body of literature.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Editorial coordinated by several guest editors of a research topic.

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 04 August 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00135

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Skills and Competencies for Effective Academic Advising and Personal Tutoring

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Advising/personal tutoring has moved from the fringes of higher education to the center of student success initiatives. Advising professionals serve as faculty members, mentors, student advocates, and campus leaders. Drawing upon data from an empirical investigation regarding the professionalization of academic advising, we examine the critical aspects related to performing effective academic advising and personal tutoring. Using directed qualitative content analysis, data were examined for evidence of professional values, professional skills, professional behaviors, training, and continuing professional education and development. We consider the findings in comparison to NACADA's Core Values, the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education in support of student success by promoting excellence in academic advising (EAA), NACADA's Core Competencies of Academic Advising, Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Standards, UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring, and United Kingdom's National Occupational Standards.

Keywords: professional values, professional skills, professional behaviors, training, continuing professional education/development, directed content analysis

OPEN ACCESS

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *29 January 2020*
Accepted: *06 July 2020*
Published: *04 August 2020*

Citation:
McGill CM, Ali M and Barton D (2020) Skills and Competencies for Effective Academic Advising and Personal Tutoring. Front. Educ. 5:135. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00135

INTRODUCTION

Academic advising and personal tutoring has moved from the fringes of higher education to find its place at the center of student success initiatives in higher education. Advising professionals, also known as academic advisors and personal tutors, serve as faculty members, mentors, student advocates, and campus leaders. United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020), describes personal tutoring as "A purposeful personal relationship" in which an advisor/tutor "enables students to become autonomous, confident learners and engaged members of society. This ongoing and collaborative relationship connects students deeply to their institution, supporting them through their course and beyond." NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising has developed strategic goals that include a focus on research and the scholarship of academic advising. NACADA (2006) described academic advising as:

> *...a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes.*

Personal tutoring and academic advising, and our practice and understanding of it, is informed by the regional context in which is it practiced. The authors represent three different national and advising/tutoring contexts. Craig is from the United States (US), in which academic advising is performed by people in at least two capacities: faculty advisors and primary-role advisors. Primary-role academic advisors are individuals whose job is solely devoted to advising (in contrast to faculty advisors, who also teach, do research, etc.). As a faculty activity to support students, academic advising has existed in some form since the colonial era (Cate and Miller, 2015). From 1870 to 1970, the number of majors and career options for students increased, "spawning new roles and positions, one of which was the academic advisor" (Kuhn, 2008, p. 5). Due to the continually expansive opportunities available, students required more guidance from trained professionals. The role of primary-role advisor was expanded and became more pronounced as schools began offering students the opportunity to choose electives (Schulenberg and Lindhorst, 2008). Although the advisor role was increasing in its importance and required people who had advanced skills, these roles were often viewed as clerical, and university officials had little interest in examining their importance and role of influence in the student college experience (Schulenberg and Lindhorst, 2008). Today, advising in the United States is practiced by faculty and primary-role advisors alike.

Mehvash is from United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has a large population of transient expatriate community. To cater to the needs of the diverse population, there are many different educational curricula (American, British, South Asian, etc.) in the country. This creates interesting challenges as student move from one nation's curriculum at secondary education to another nation's curriculum for higher education. This also makes it difficult to define advising in the country as it is heavily influenced by the curriculum of the college/university. As in the United States, the role of advising was viewed as clerical in nature and was initially often done by administrative assistants. As higher education evolved in this relatively new country, the role of academic advisors increased in importance and there was an increase in primary-role advisors. Additionally, faculty advisors were encouraged to develop skills in the area of advising. At Mehvash's institution, academic advisors are staff/faculty advisors within each major/college. They are responsible for course advising, mentoring students within their academic units, and monitoring degree progression. Primary-role advisors with the advising office are responsible for working with students who need academic skills training and support for retention, persistence, and academic progression. Advising is organized in the Shared Split model (King, 2008) where students have advisors within their academic units for the duration of their studies in the university and an advising office that works with specific groups of students such as students exploring other majors or students on academic probation. This Shared Split model allows students to have long term advising relationships with faculty/staff academic advisors within their respective majors/college. It also offers additional advising supports for students who are academically struggling to enhance their chances for academic success.

Dionne is from the United Kingdom, in which almost all academic staff (equivalent to United States "faculty") are asked to take on the role of personal tutor (Mynott, 2016). Personal tutors also teach and do research alongside administrative roles. The personal tutoring role in the United Kingdom has evolved and changed over time (Grant, 2006). Traditionally the role stemmed from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, whereby personal tutors were provided to offer a parental role to students during the transition from home to university (Dobinson-Harrington, 2006). Historically, it was more of a role to support students with their academic skills and academic work. Today, the role is all-encompassing and personal tutors tend to take on a pastoral role in addition to academic support. Across the sector including nationally and internationally the personal tutoring role has various titles for example: Personal Tutor, Personal Academic Tutor, Academic Advisor, Academic Tutor, Academic Personal Tutor and Personal Development Tutor. Although there is a range of models of personal tutoring in the United Kingdom, two models are predominant. In one model, the personal tutor is responsible for supporting students pastorally, academically as well as their personal development. In the second model (see Earwaker, 1992), a personal tutor is responsible for the academic progress and personal development and a student services staff member has a full-time role as a welfare officer who provides the student with pastoral support. There is an assumption anyone who is an academic member of staff can be an academic advisor or personal tutor without any training, that it will "come naturally" (Owen, 2002; Gubby and McNab, 2013; McGill et al., 2020). Beyond the credentials required to be an academic/faculty member, there are no qualifications needed to perform personal tutoring in the United Kingdom. Many, personal tutors learn the specific skills requirements for personal tutoring on the job. However, in many United Kingdom institutions, in order to become an academic member of staff there is often a requirement of a doctoral qualification or an expectation that an individual is working toward a doctoral qualification. Increasingly, new academic staff are required as part of their probation to gain a professional recognition for teaching and/or supporting learning or training in learning theory and pedagogic practice for example, a Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) or equivalent. Some of these qualifications may include an element of training in the skills required to fulfill the personal tutor role.

Given the variety of functions advisors serve and the varied environments they operate in, it is critical to consider the essential competencies for advising professionals. Menke et al. (2018) found communication skills to be more important than knowledge of the curriculum, technology, teamwork/collaboration, critical thinking, having patience, or multicultural competence. They attributed the variation in necessary skills identified by participants to the variety of environments that advisors practice within. To consider the impact of learning opportunities on advisor evaluation and performance, McGill et al. (2020) found training of relational skills is often necessary but absent from advising training and professional development programs.

In this study, drawing upon data from an empirical investigation regarding the professionalization of academic advising, we examine the aspects related to performing academic advising and personal tutoring. Our chapter proceeds in five sections: literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and limitations/future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several organizations have established best practices for academic advising and personal tutoring in different national contexts. We highlight NACADA's Core Values (NACADA, 2017a), the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education in support of student success by promoting excellence in academic advising (EAA), NACADA's Core Competencies of Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017c), Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020), and United Kingdom's National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020).

Core values for advising, considered critical to the way that advising is done, are reflected in the actions of advising and are meaningful to the function of advising (Lochtie et al., 2018). NACADA is guided by a set of Core Values (NACADA, 2017a) reflecting the practice of academic advising globally in varied regional, cultural and educational contexts and roles. These core values include the virtues of respect, inclusivity, professionalism, integrity, caring, empowerment, and commitment. NACADA core values demonstrate the commitment advising professionals should demonstrate to their students, their institutions, and the professional practice of academic advising.

Additionally, NACADA has partnered with the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education in support of student success by promoting excellence in academic advising (EAA). This partnership resulted in the identification of nine aspirational standards for institutes of higher education globally called the Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017b). These aspirational conditions promote excellence in academic advising:

1. Institutional commitment: Getting buy-in from senior management for the important rile of academic advising in student success;
2. Learning: Continuously building learning opportunities for advisors and ensure advising outcomes are assessed and aligned with institutional goals;
3. Improvement and the scholarship of advising: Engaging in evidence-based assessment and research;
4. Organization: Ensuring the structure of advising within an institution aligns with its mission and goals;
5. Equity, inclusion, and diversity: Advising policies should value equity, inclusion, and diversity;
6. Advisor selection and development: Empowering advisors through professional development opportunities and clear expectations
7. Collaboration and communication: Fostering collaborative partnerships to enhance advising;
8. Student purpose and pathways: Outlining pathways to student success and removing barriers to optimize learning; and
9. Technology enabled advising: Incorporating technology to strengthen advising practice.

According to EAA (NACADA, 2017b), institutes of higher education that exhibit excellence in advising should have an advising mission that aligns with the institute's own mission and strategic goals. The advising delivery system should be responsive to the changing needs of students as determined by ongoing assessment efforts. Advising should be a collaborative process and include the appropriate use of technology. The advisors should manifest the professional ethics and virtues of the advising field such as those identified in the NACADA Core Values.

NACADA's professional development committee developed the Core Competencies of Academic Advising (NACADA, 2017c) to define more nuanced work roles of academic advisors. They are divided into *relational* skills that academic advisors must demonstrate, *conceptual* areas advisors must understand, and *informational* knowledge advisors must master. These core competencies are designed to serve as models for training and assessment programs for primary-role advisors, faculty advisors, advising administrators, learning professionals, personal tutors, etc.

The core competencies model outlines several specific *relational* competencies:

1. Articulate a personal philosophy of academic advising;
2. Create rapport and build academic advising relationships;
3. Communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner;
4. Plan and conduct successful advising interactions;
5. Promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of the curriculum;
6. Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting; and
7. Engage in on-going assessment and development of the advising practice (NACADA, 2017c, p. 3–4).

The *relational* competencies relate to the core skills described as daily actions that personal tutors must engage in for effective advising aimed at student success (Lochtie et al., 2018).

The *conceptual* component of the core competencies outlined by NACADA include an understanding of:

1. The history and role of academic advising in higher education;
2. NACADA's Core Values of Academic Advising;
3. Theory relevant to academic advising;
4. Academic advising approaches and strategies;
5. Expected outcomes of academic advising; and
6. How equitable and inclusive environments are created and maintained (NACADA, 2017c, p. 1–2).

The *informational* component includes knowledge of:

1. Institution specific history, mission, vision, values, and culture;
2. Curriculum, degree programs, and other academic requirements and options;
3. Institution specific policies, procedures, rules, and regulations;
4. Legal guidelines of advising practice, including privacy regulations and confidentiality;

5. The characteristics, needs, and experience of major and emerging student populations;
6. Campus and community resources that support student success; and
7. Information technology applicable to relevant advising roles (NACADA, 2017c, p. 2–3).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is intended to describe the essential mission, programs and services, leadership, and organizational structures of focal functional areas in student affairs as well as the skills, education, and knowledge that practitioners need to be effective (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2015). CAS are primarily concerned with student learning objectives from advising and what advising programs need to provide students so that can reach these learning objectives. For instance, within the CAS domains, knowledge acquisition and application, cognitive complexity, and practical competence demonstrate development that goes far beyond transactional information. The CAS domains of interpersonal competence and humanitarianism and civic engagement deal with forming meaningful relationships and appreciating cultural and human differences with a global perspective. The portion of the practical competencies dealing with effective communication also relate. The CAS domains of knowledge integration, cognitive complexity: reflective thinking, and intrapersonal development illustrate how students begin connecting knowledge they learn in their classes to other knowledge and make meaning of it. They consider how knowledge connects with their experiences. In this way, students become reflective of their identity and how their education is changing them. This intrapersonal development leads them to re-evaluate their values.

Although CAS underscore the importance of academic advising and incorporated literature from other foundational documents, they did not especially demonstrate skills and competencies advisors need to do advising well. The standards do give some framework to guide advising practitioners regarding role boundaries and responsibilities and especially provides learning outcomes for advising. For advisors and personal tutors to contribute to student learning and development, they must:

1. Identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes;
2. Articulate how the student learning and development outcomes align with the six CAS student learning and development domains and related dimensions;
3. Assess relevant and desirable student learning and development;
4. Provide evidence of impact on outcomes;
5. Articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed; and
6. Use evidence gathered to create strategies for improvement of programs and services (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2015, p. 8–9).

The United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020) lays out four core competencies personal tutors and academic advisors need, to effectively support student success. One of the most important aims of the framework is to raise the recognition and perceived value of advising/personal tutoring. There are four components: three of the components – *conceptual, informational*, and *relational* are adapted from the NACADA Core Competences of Academic Advising. These components have a similar focus to the NACADA Core Competences (i.e., the *conceptual* component focuses on the understanding of tutors in terms of ideas and theories, the *informational* component is about tutors' knowledge and the *relational* component focuses on tutors' skills). The fourth component, *professional* is specific to the UKAT Framework and focuses on the commitment of tutors to their students, their institution, and the wider community. The *professional* component outlines four competencies:

1. Create and support environments that consider the needs and perspectives of students, and respect individual learners;
2. Appreciate students' views and cultures, maintain a student-centered approach and mindset, and treat students with sensitivity and fairness;
3. Commit to students, colleagues, and their institutions through engagement in continuing professional development, scholarly enquiry, and the evaluation of professional practices; and
4. Understand the implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement, and engage in on-going evaluation and development of advising and tutoring practice United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020, p. 3).

The scheme is based on the submission of an e-portfolio of retrospective evidence of practice referenced against the competencies of the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring. It allows advisors and tutors to gain recognition for their practice and experience at one of three levels: Recognized Practitioner in Advising, Recognized Senior Advisor and Recognized Leader in Advising. UKAT are promoting the scheme to higher education institutions and encouraging them to support their academic advisors and personal tutors to gain recognition through participating in the scheme. The scheme is open to anyone in the United Kingdom higher education sector.

The National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020) dictate good practice in personal tutoring and outline criteria as a benchmark for individuals who are undertaking the personal tutor role. The focus is around supporting student retention and achievement. These standards describe what a personal tutor needs to do, know and understand in order to carry out their role in a consistent way and to a nationally recognized level of competence. The NOS for personal tutoring consists of eleven standards, which are highlighted below:

1. Manage self, work relationships, and work demands;
2. Develop own practice in personal tutoring;
3. Create a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment;
4. Explore and identify learners' needs and address barriers to learning;

5. Enable learners to set learning targets and evaluate their progress and achievement;
6. Encourage the development of learner autonomy;
7. Enable learners to develop personal and social skills and cultural awareness;
8. Enable learners to enhance learning and employability skills;
9. Support learners' transition and progression;
10. Provide learner access to specialist support services; and
11. Contribute to improving the quality and impact of personal tutoring and its reputation within their own organization (p. 2)

In exploring effective personal tutoring and academic advising Lochtie et al. (2018) define the core values of the effective personal tutor. The core values are guiding principles and fundamental to providing effective student support and they need to be shared with staff and demonstrated consistently to have an impact on the student experience. They are:

1. High expectations: Challenging students, expecting them to make an effort and encouraging independence;
2. Approachability: Being friendly and easy for students to talk to;
3. Diplomacy: Being tactful and a mediator to calm a situation;
4. Being non-judgmental: Avoid making judgments or jumping to conclusions;
5. Compassion: Be concerned, supportive and caring;
6. The "equal partner, not superior" approach: Demonstrate mutual respect and a positive attitude, role model appropriate behavior;
7. Authenticity: Be authentic and selfless; and
8. Valuing students as individuals: Get to know your students, they want to feel that they matter (p. 33).

They state that the values are important in professional practice and that they are present in the way personal tutors respond to challenges. True core values are evident in how personal tutors undertake their role and help them feel that they are doing valuable and rewarding work. The core values represent what is important for personal tutors to consider in providing effective student support. For individuals to understand the core values they need to observe others demonstrating these core values.

In addition to the core values, Lochtie et al. (2018) highlight the core skills of the effective personal tutor, they are:

1. Building genuine rapport with your students: Develop a relationship with students through effective communication;
2. Active listening and questioning: Listen actively, observe and notice verbal and non-verbal communication;
3. Challenging: Set goals and encourage students to be independent learners;
4. Reflecting back and summarizing: Encourage students to reflect on their development and achievements, listen actively and paraphrase back to the student;
5. Developing independence and resilience: Encourage independence and help students to recognize that they can learn from failures;
6. Teamwork: Work effectively with colleagues;
7. Decision-making and problem solving: Make difficult decisions if necessary;
8. Role modeling: Demonstrate positive core values and be a role model for students;
9. Proactivity, creativity and innovation: Be proactive in terms of interacting with students, creative and innovative practices can support successful student retention;
10. Working under pressure: Tutoring can be challenging, ask for help and support from colleagues;
11. Consistency: Be consistent and reliable, let students know how to contact you and your availability;
12. Critical thinking: Model a critical thinking approach; and
13. Digital literacy: Use technology to support tutoring (p. 39).

To be an effective personal tutor, tutors need to practice the core values and use the core skills (Lochtie et al., 2018). Skills are about expertise, being competent and efficient and in terms of personal tutoring, they are about doing the role well. The core values underpin the core skills, personal tutors use these skills and decide which skills to use dependent on the context and the individual student. It is recognized that in using the core skills this takes time, practice and reflection.

Given the lack of a shared global definition of academic advising and personal tutoring alongside the lack of a universal pre-requisite training or degree, professionals in the field look to the following to provide standards of best practice for academic advising and personal tutoring. The NACADA Core Values and Core Competencies, the UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring, the United Kingdom's National Occupational Standards, CAS, and the Gardner Institutes (EAA). There are similarities between these standards of advising and tutoring practice that this study investigates. The study explores the commonalities between the above noted standards of best practices in advising and tutoring, using directed qualitative content analysis in order to identify professional values, professional skills, behaviors, and training and continuing professional education necessary to practice academic advising and personal tutoring.

METHODS

Seventeen NACADA leaders from North America offered insight into a broad range of issues regarding the professionalization of academic advising. Leaders in the field of advising have a critical perspective to offer when studying the advisor/tutor role. With a combined 328 years of NACADA membership, a combined 402 years of advising experience, and a combined 469 years of higher education experience, the leaders in this study have seen the field evolve over four decades. They have worked on a variety of college campuses in a variety of roles. To qualify for the study, participants had to be involved in one of the following leadership roles: a commission chair, a subject matter expert publishing about the professionalization of academic advising, or those who have held high office (e.g., presidents, board members, etc.) within the association. Many of them have offered these perspectives through scholarly contributions and presentations and through their efforts in building NACADA as a professional association. They have been leaders on their campuses in transforming academic advising from a transactional activity of course selection to one that changes the lives of students. It is important to note all leaders were from North America and speaking about academic advising from a North American perspective.

The study was carried out with approval from the Institutional Review Board of McGill's doctoral-granting institution. All participants gave their written informed consent to have their data included in this research. An interview protocol was designed to examine a variety of issues related to professionalizing the field of academic advising: the essence and distinctive nature of the field, the various roles performed by its practitioners, the career stages of advisors, the role of scholarly literature and graduate curricula, the perceptions of the field by other stakeholders, and future directions. The semi-structured interviews ranged from 74 to 147 min. The interviews were recorded on two devices and data were professionally transcribed and sent to participants to verify accuracy.

The interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo, a computer qualitative analysis software program to assist with tracking the codes. Data were first approached with open coding and findings from thematic analyses produced articles (McGill, 2018; McGill, undereview). Once these data were organized by themes, participants were given the opportunity to confirm meaningfulness of the themes. For the current article, the dataset was approached using a deductive coding logic and directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In directed content analysis, a pre-determined framework is used to guide the research question, the coding scheme, as well as relationships between codes, categories, or themes (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). This is a process of deductive category application in which researchers can "begin coding immediately with the predetermined codes" (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). To round out our categories, we furnished them with quotations adding nuanced meanings to the categories. In qualitative research, the findings depend on extensive and judicious use of quotations from participants.

The potential for validation of previous work is one of the strengths of directive qualitative content analysis. However, the researchers engaged in following measures of validity: researcher reflexivity and investigator triangulation (Patton, 2002). One important duty for a qualitative researcher is to locate themselves in the research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). This participant-observation role affords opportunities but demands attending to the potential bias of the researcher (Yin, 2009). At the time of data collection, Craig was an academic advisor in the United States for 8 years and active member of NACADA leadership and therefore, it is impossible to remove himself from this professional context. Thus, many of the participants interviewed he knew well, and conversations about this topic have extended beyond the interviews themselves. As the primary instrument (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015), the researcher takes themselves out of study as much as possible, setting aside pre-conceived ideas about the phenomenon "to take a fresh perspective toward the phenomenon under examination" (Creswell, 2013, p. 80). This was only possible to a certain degree but remaining cautious of this helped him to manage his own subjectivities (Peshkin, 1988) and be alert for the potential for bias (Yin, 2009). To assist with the potential bias and more importantly, to offer a lens external to North American lens, authors two and three (representing different countries and continents), were brought in for their cultural context and insight. Mehvash works in an American curriculum institution, American University of Sharjah (AUS) in the United Arab Emirates. For two consecutive years AUS has topped the Times Higher Education (THE) list of universities with the highest percentage of international students globally. AUS boosts 84% of its student being international students representing 90 different counties. Advising at AUS is divided between academic units (majors/college) and an advising office. Dionne is an Educational Developer working in a Russell Group, research intensive United Kingdom university, the University of Birmingham, a focus of her role is to support staff to develop their expertise in personal tutoring. She is a doctoral researcher and her research is about supporting and developing staff who have a role as a personal tutor. Dionne also has a leadership role in UKAT. In working together, we participated in investigator triangulation (Patton, 2002), "the use of several different researchers or evaluators" (p. 247) and therefore, engaged in *collaboration* throughout the analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

Inspired by the discussion of core values and skills of the personal tutor (Lochtie et al., 2018), the data were re-examined for evidence of professional values, professional skills and behaviors, and training and continuing professional education. We present our findings accordingly.

Professional Values

A few participants described a professional "set of values." Participant 4 said, *"There are some habits of mind and heart that no matter how brilliant you are, you are not going to be a good advisor if you don't like students. Perhaps that should go without saying but perhaps it doesn't."* Participant 6 described an activity he developed for on-boarding new academic advisors to help them determine and articulate their professional and personal values. He asked advisors what their work meant to them and what the goals and objectives of advising should be. After some rounds of collecting this data, he could begin to predict who would be a successful advisor "*based on the values they selected.*" He continued:

> *The values characterizing good advisors were: caring for students, a service-oriented ethic, a sense of initiative and a commitment to good work. These are descriptions of great employees anywhere, but what I've come to believe in advising it's the key. The skills can then be developed from there. And most people with that set of values have already developed interpersonal skills. Can they relate well to*

students? Can they help students to work through the challenges they're facing? Can they coach them? Can they assist them? Can they design a process for working with their advisees that helps them to accomplish their goals? Interpersonal skills, and the ability to both design and engage in a process of advising. Have a plan, a sense of purpose, and a way of achieving it in working with students. (Participant 6)

Participants noted it was important for someone in an advising role to like college students, who enjoyed interacting with people and diverse populations. Much of this was described as traits an advisor had before arriving on the professional scene. Participant 12 noted:

...It's the personality of the person in the position that makes them a good advisor. You can have people with different majors, and one's a really good advisor and one's lousy. But it's because they care, want to help, and value student success.

One's "self-definition" is one's identity, how they view themselves, and how they live their professional lives. Participant 15 discussed the importance of self-awareness in one's work:

We have to know ourselves. We have to know who we are, what we are doing, why we are doing this to be effective in working with students. To make a more satisfying and fulfilling line of work is to keep that at the forefront of my mind.

Results indicated that key values that advising professionals should embody include caring for students, desire to work with diverse body of students, commitment to student success, and service orientation.

Professional Skills and Behaviors

Although much of the data spoke to the need to have values/attitudes that align with advising as opposed to a set of skills, there were some professional skills and behaviors mentioned. Effective academic advisors and personal tutors needed to possess patience and empathy, listening skills and the ability to oscillate from tiny details to the bigger picture. Participant 1 said:

A genuine human empathy for those who are seeking an education. And not everyone has that. People who value education self-select into advising for a reason. And there's a lot of interpersonal skills...active listening skills, the ability to perceive what is not being said, and ask questions that can make that be said...The ability to move from really big picture to ridiculous details. And back and forth, easily. And that's a pretty distinctive skill that not everybody has.

Good academic advisors and personal tutors also have an ability to understand and "read" people and have a tolerance for ambiguity, *"knowing things are not all that simple"* (Participant 5). Participants also noted it was important for academic advisors and personal tutors to have a willingness to collaborate with other campus units (e.g., department faculty, financial aid), and be able to prioritize tasks and switch gears when necessary.

To serve students in these ways, academic advisors must wear many hats, to be able to read and interpret students: both the issues students are presenting *and* those that are beneath the surface. This process is an artform of integration:

The ability to integrate the theoretical understanding of what is happening, the conceptual and cognitive understanding of your job with the human interaction. It's simultaneously seeing the student in front of you, meeting them where they are, integrating your responsibility as a professional, and your institutional mission, to marshal these intangible intangibles. I operationalize that very practically, even though "artform" sounds like something that you can't define. Those are measurable competencies that are built over time. (Participant 9)

Academic advisors must be able to integrate many skills on the spot and have a broad and in-depth understanding of the campus and the curriculum of the institution:

...being able to understand complex knowledge and apply it to individual situations. That's critical because the amount of information is expected of advisors has grown exponentially since I started in this field. Because the requirements have expanded and technology has made it even more challenging. (Participant 13)

Skills and behaviors such as effective communication, empathy, understanding of curriculum, and collaborative efforts are key for advisors and personal tutors.

Training and Continuing Professional Education/Development

Since not everyone has experience/academic training in advising or advising-related areas, participants noted the need for solid training. Continued professional education (CPE) (continued professional development in the United Kingdom) was regularly considered an important part of the work of an academic advisor/personal tutor. For instance, Participant 8 described the concept of the knowledge workers, who *"are lifelong informal learners and see growing themselves as something they not only need to do, but also as something they want to do, and part of their self-definition."*

These skills and sets of knowledge that can be acquired in a number of ways. Specifically, the self-directed learning a professional needs to take on when they lack the education to practice advising. Participant 9 reflected:

It's possible to gain an understanding of the field through experience and then come to theory later. I had never taken a class in college student personnel, higher ed, student development theory; post-secondary theory, higher ed. anything...For the last 20 years, every single piece of anything I've ever written, my homework was building an understanding of the field from scratch. That's bringing a scholar's approach, not just being a learner.

Training and continued professional develop of academic advisors or personal tutors is also important to improve the perception of academic advising/personal tutoring. This involves observing systematic issues and institutional processes. One participant suggested institutional approaches to training and professional development is the key issue to professionalizing the field. She argued:

You must be seen as skills and competencies you learn and build over time. If we transformed that practice and nothing else, we *would make significant progress. We would see significant changes in the field because hundreds of institutions would be asking, "what should the curriculum be? What should we be teaching?" And that's a reflexive act that creates and recreates its own reality.* (Participant 9)

Findings confirm the importance of continued professional development and training for advisors and personal tutors so they can be informed of international best practices and remain informed of institutional changes.

DISCUSSION

An important professional value consistent across the frameworks and evidenced within our findings is that a strong advising relationship involves communicating in a manner that values the diversity of student experiences and backgrounds. Advisors and personal tutors should nurture a relationship that respects and engages students' varied perspectives and backgrounds. Focus on diversity allows advisors and personal tutors to address inequalities and barriers in higher education for a range of underrepresented and marginalized student groups (Selzer and Rouse, 2013). Institutional advising outcomes should be aligned with the changing needs of a diverse global community and social justice frameworks should be embedded in the practice of advising delivery (Rouse, 2011). Students' diverse identities influence their educational experiences and impact the advising interactions.

Our data suggested that advising professionals should have the integrity to trust their colleagues and demonstrate genuine empathy and care for their students and their life experiences. Advising professionals must take care of the diverse student body that is going through new challenges in a hyper connected world and should be able to read students and their situations. This relates to NACADA's value of professionalism that stresses the importance of advisors working toward the greater good of students, the value of caring that stresses the importance of nurturing and supporting students, the value of inclusivity that stresses openness, acceptance, and equity, and the value of empowerment that stresses recognition of student potential.

Our findings also illuminate aspects of the United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020), the United Kingdom National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020) and the core values and skills of the effective personal tutor (Lochtie et al., 2018). Participants described tutors/advisor having a set of professional values; the *professional* component in the UKAT Framework is about the commitment to professional values. The findings support the *professional* competencies that focus on the needs and perspectives of students and appreciate students' views and cultures, maintaining a student-centered approach United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring [UKAT] (2020). There is evidence of caring for students, being committed to them and of valuing students. The core values (Lochtie et al., 2018) of being compassionate and valuing students as individuals are present in our findings. Professional values are about how tutors/advisors work together as identified in the National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020) first standard, managing relationships and also described by Lochtie et al. (2018) as "the equal partner, not superior" approach.

Academic advising and personal tutoring is, at its core, a relational process. The *Relational* component of NACADA's core competencies (Farr and Cunningham, 2017) is a set of skills academic advisors and personal tutors must demonstrate and include (but are not limited to) the skill to create rapport and build a positive growth-oriented relationship with students, inclusive, effective, and respectful communication, and having successful advising interactions. A solid relationship between an academic advisor or personal tutor and a student forms the basis of all the interventions that may be applied in advising/tutoring. Although academic advisors and personal tutors are not mental health counselors, we can draw upon the psychology literature, which identifies empathy, goal consensus/collaboration, therapeutic alliance, and positive regard as factors leading to positive gains in a therapeutic environment when they are combined with empirically supported interventions (Laska et al., 2014). Since students need to feel comfortable going to their academic advisor or personal tutor (Yale, 2019), academic advisors and personal tutors should possess certain characteristics to facilitate relationships with students. Some of these characteristics are empathy, goal consensus, collaboration, alliance, and positive regard; these are more likely to see positive gains in the advising relationships (Ali, 2018). Academic advisors and personal tutors should embrace Rogers' (1983) qualities of genuineness, trust, acceptance and empathetic understanding (Quinn, 1995). Academic advisors and personal tutors acting as an advocate, being empathetic, proactive, reliable, enthusiastic, having a good level of knowledge and seeming interested in the student, being supportive and non-judgmental are traits valued by students (Stephen et al., 2008; Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, knowing the student's name and treating each student as a unique individual (Smith, 2008; Barker and Mamiseishvili, 2014; Ghenghesh, 2018) is significant to the relationship. Successful relationships transpire when students feel that their academic advisor or personal tutor genuinely cares for them and for their success. Therefore, establishing a positive and caring relationship by being approachable and accessible is important for academic advisors and personal tutors (Braine and Parnell, 2011).

Professional skills and behaviors are concerned with patience and empathy, listening skills and the ability to oscillate from tiny details to the bigger picture. The Gardner Institute's Conditions of Excellence in Academic Advising (EAA) include effective communication, focus on student success, value of equity, inclusion, and diversity, advisor development and scholarship of advising. The *relational* component in the UKAT Framework aligns with skills that tutors need, this component is concerned with relationships, being empathetic and compassionate and communicating in an inclusive and respectful manner. Lochtie et al. (2018) list active listening, questioning, and building genuine rapport with students as fundamental skills. An additional skill highlighted is to be able to collaborate with colleagues across campus in various roles, which is identified in the *relational* component and the National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020) standard ten – provide learner access to specialist support services. In this section there is a recognition of the roles that a person may have in addition to the tutor/advisor role and that this requires problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting which aligns with the *relational* component and the *professional* component and standard one of NOS – managing work demands. Our findings support these conditions for excellence and lend support that advisors and personal tutors should foster student success through empathy and effective communication skills that respect students' perspectives, experiences, and identities. Advisors and personal tutors should enjoy working with students and be committed to seeing their students advance. Additionally, advisors and personal tutors need to advance the field of academic advising through scholarly inquiry and should strive to be life-long learners by actively seeking out professional development opportunities.

As the NACADA Core Competencies provide some nuanced framework for the work roles of academic advisors and personal tutors, our data also illuminate aspects of the competencies. The *conceptual* competencies are concerned with concepts advisors must understand. Principally, our findings highlight the importance of the Core Values of academic advising. Participants spoke about the important "habits of mind and heart" to perform the work of advising and to care about the academic success of students. The was little evidence for *informational* competencies, which provide the substance for the work. This is perhaps because having institutional knowledge, knowledge about policies and procedures, about any legal regulations is assumed by most people to be part of the work of advising. Participant 9 did mention the necessity of being able to pull elements together in the moment when meeting with a student. But this deals not just with the *informational* competencies regarding the institution and curriculum, but also a consideration of that student (*conceptual* competencies) and what that student needs in that moment and how to deliver that information (*relational* competencies). The *relational* competencies provide the skills, what the advisor must have the ability to do. It is perhaps unsurprising, that evidence of these competencies were found throughout our data. For instance, in discussing what he was looking for in new advisors, Participant 6 discussed the importance of creating rapport and relationships with students, the ability to communicate respectfully, having the skills needed to plan and conduct successful advising interactions and to be able to help students work through issues. Many participants noted the importance of advisors and personal tutors possessing patience, empathy, listening skills and the ability to move from small details to the bigger picture. Finally, Participant 15 discussed the importance of self-reflection and advisors knowing themselves and being self-aware when working with students. Although articulating a personal philosophy of academic advising was not mentioned explicitly, all these other aspects of the *relational* component speak to the importance of having informed, nuanced, and respectful practice. Although we found the most evidence of *relational* competencies in our data, having skills, context, and substance in each area is important: "Without understanding (conceptual elements), there is no context for the delivery of services. Without information, there is no substance to advising. And, without personal skills (relational), the quality of the advisee/advisor relationship is left to chance" (Habley, 1995, p. 76).

Advisors and personal tutors need continued training to remain current and knowledgeable about international best practices in the field of advising as well as the changing needs of students. NACADA's Core Value of Commitment stresses excellence through scholarly inquiry and life-long learning. Competencies of the UKAT Framework are concerned with tutors engaging with theory linked to advising and tutoring and continuing professional development and scholarly enquiry. Additionally, National Occupations Standards [NOS] (2020) standard two focuses on tutors developing their own tutoring practice. In many circumstances, academic advisors and personal tutors gain professional experience on their own, often utilizing professional development opportunities available through NACADA and other higher education professional associations. There are programs available in education but those are mostly geared toward primary, secondary, or special education. On the job training opportunities such as teaching or research assistants or other student worker/work study jobs that may expose individuals to student development theory are also not as prolific in the middle east as they are in the west. In response to this demonstrated need to equip academic advisors to work with a host of student issues, some institutions have developed robust training and professional development programs. An effective advisor-development program consists of three elements: the *audience* (type of advisor/advising situation), *content* (what should be included), and instructional or *delivery mode* of the program (the most appropriate way to engage the participants) (Nutt, 2003). "The program for faculty members may vary from that of one for full-time advisors.... The type of advisor may be a major consideration for the designer who is determining the content level, the delivery mode, format, and frequency of the training sessions" (Nutt, 2003, p. 11). In building advising training and development programs, there needs to be a concerted effort to add *relational* competencies to learning opportunities to practice skills and techniques (McGill et al., 2020). For example, through shadowing, the use of vignettes, role playing, clinical observation, and cognitive apprenticeships (Duslak and McGill, 2014), advisors can have the opportunity to bolster their relational skills and competencies.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The primary limitation of this study is that participants were all NACADA leaders from North America commenting about academic advising in a North American setting. Therefore, these perspectives are not representative of the feelings of the entire field. Future research might engage in similar questions with a larger pool and with participants who do not necessarily represent NACADA leadership. For example, examining the perspectives of people working in academic advisors or personal tutors around the world would reveal insight into the advising or tutoring role that may have not been discussed in the literature or from a non-North American perspective.

Questions about why academic advisors or personal tutors chose to enter the field and why they choose to stay could help to elucidate the meaning advisors and tutors give to their advising/tutoring work.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The dataset generated for this study will not be made publicly available due to the home institution's requirements and the agreement of the study participants. Therefore, the raw data used in this article is not available for distribution.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Florida International University IRB. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CM collected the manuscript uses data and part of a larger project. MA and DB provided international perspectives and contributed to the manuscript report. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

FUNDING

Research for this study was made possible by generous support from NACADA: The Global Community of Academic Advising (Project ID: 800005867).

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 14 October 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.531451

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Professional Standards and Recognition for UK Personal Tutoring and Advising

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The Higher Education and Research Act established both a regulatory framework and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) with associated metrics for student retention, progression and employability in the United Kingdom. As a key site in meeting these requirements, the significance of personal tutoring is clear. Despite this, according to existing institutional research, there is a need for developmental support, greater clarification on the requisite competencies, and adequate recognition for those undertaking this challenging role. Moreover, arguably compounding these concerns is the lack of distinct professional standards for personal tutoring and advising against which to measure effective practice, only recently addressed by the publication of *The UKAT Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring.* Through a review of the literature supported by findings from a survey of practitioners, this paper discusses the need for such standards, and the skills and competencies populating them. Additionally, the usefulness of pre-existing standards pertinent to tutoring work (such as the *United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE*) are evaluated and the value and recognition with which personal tutoring standards could be associated are advanced. The survey supported the need for specific standards – represented by the UKAT framework – as evident from the literature. Justifications provided for both this and the opposing view are examined. Clarity for both individual practitioners and institutions was stipulated along with meaningful recognition and reward for this work which is considered highly important and yet 'invisible.' The participants and literature reviewed identify relevant content along with illuminating the debate about the relationships between personal tutoring, teaching and professional advising roles. Valuable analysis of standards, recognition and reward also emerged. This is considered by discussing the connection between standards and changes to practice, responses to policy developments and the purpose of 'standards' in comparison to 'guidance.' The paper proposes that the recent introduction and use of a bespoke framework is a necessary response to alleviate some of the current tensions which beset personal tutoring and advising in higher education.

Keywords: personal tutoring, academic advising, professional standards, professional development, professional recognition

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
Oscar Van Den Wijngaard,
Maastricht University, Netherlands

Reviewed by:
Craig M. McGill,
University of South Dakota, United States
Mark Te Wierik,
Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *31 January 2020*
Accepted: *02 September 2020*
Published: *14 October 2020*

Citation:
Walker BW (2020) Professional Standards and Recognition for UK Personal Tutoring and Advising. Front. Educ. 5:531451. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.531451

INTRODUCTION

The continuing importance of personal tutoring in United Kingdom Higher Education (HE) is evident from recent research (Thomas, 2012; Thomas et al., 2017) and policy (OfS, 2018). However, corresponding understanding and recognition has not readily followed and therefore it may often lack attention, support, and development at practitioner level (Owen, 2002; Ridley, 2006; Stephen et al., 2008; McFarlane, 2016; Walker, 2020). In addition, the 'massification' and widening access of United Kingdom HE has hastened the need to meet increasingly diverse student needs. This situation both creates the demand for individualized support through personal tutoring and arguably, simultaneously renders it impossible to deliver effectively given unmanageable student/staff ratios and workload demands, also recently identified as key challenges for United States 'faculty advisors' (Hart-Baldridge, 2020).

The response to these dilemmas in recent United Kingdom-based literature and support materials has provided definitions and depictions of effective practice through modeling tutoring interactions (Stork and Walker, 2015; Lochtie et al., 2018) and evidence of positive impact from developmental training (Walker, 2020). Inherent within the outcomes of such research is the call for the 'professionalization' of personal tutoring. In the United States, wider research on defining the role from those undertaking it (Larson et al., 2018), identifying required competencies (Menke et al., 2018) and the question of professionalization has been carried out (Shaffer et al., 2010; McGill, 2019; McGill et al., 2020). While the last of these is arguably more advanced in the United States, comparable dilemmas exist and leaders in the field argue the role has not yet met the sociological and societal conceptions of a 'profession' (Shaffer et al., 2010; McGill, 2019).

To determine how it may be initiated and achieved, one has to examine what may be associated with 'professionalization' more closely. Central to such an endeavor would seem to be the establishment and use of professional standards for the role (Walker, 2020) from which institutional and sectoral recognition and qualification can follow. If comparable standards constitute the foundation of professional teaching in HE [through the *United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE* (UK PSF; Advance HE, 2011)] and associated Postgraduate Certificates and Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship, then surely the same applies to personal tutoring? While some may argue that teaching and personal tutoring coalesce in the single role of an 'academic' and view them as inter-dependent, previous studies clearly show HE teachers' views on the latter's particular demands and requirements in addition to the gaps in training and support for the role (Owen, 2002; Ridley, 2006; Stephen et al., 2008; McFarlane, 2016; Hart-Baldridge, 2020; Walker, 2020).

> 'As higher education acclimates to the disequilibrium caused by change, the stature and legitimacy of academic advising will rise . . . During this time, all academic advisors . . . will be increasingly judged on their expertise and knowledge as well as their abilities and the results of their work. As a result they will be seated at the decision-making tables at colleges and universities across the globe . . . We predict that by 2025, academic advisors will garner respect from all institutional leaders and faculty members.'
>
> (McGill and Nutt, 2016, p. 353)

This paper explores the urgent issues pertaining to personal tutoring contained within McGill and Nutt's (2016) assertion, namely its importance, skills and attributes, and recognition, and their co-dependency, in the context of sectoral flux. Comprising a review of key literature discussed alongside findings from a pilot research study undertaken, this paper both explores the context within which the United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring association's (UKAT) new *Professional Framework for Advising and Tutoring* [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019, **Supplementary Appendix 2**] was developed and considers its relevance. The latter is examined in terms of the needs of the principal potential users and evaluation of pre-existing standards pertinent to tutoring work. In doing so, skills and competencies populating them and the new UKAT framework are discussed and the value and recognition with which discrete standards could be associated are proposed. The various intersections and discrepancies between the literature and the key themes of the study's findings are explored.

TERMINOLOGY AND THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

This study is within the United Kingdom context. However, given that 'academic advisor,' the term used in the United States and other countries (NACADA, 2017a), is broadly synonymous with 'personal tutor' (Grey and Lochtie, 2016), this article draws on international literature to inform the British situation while using the latter term unless directly quoting and relevant. Indeed, the preponderance of United States studies cited illustrates the richer history of American academic advising research in comparison to the dearth of such work in the United Kingdom. 'Faculty role advisors,' where academics undertake advising alongside their other duties equates to the dominant model of personal tutoring in the United Kingdom. 'Primary role advisors,' where advising is the entire role, has an increasing number of British counterparts where it is sometimes referred to as the 'super tutor' model with exemplar job titles including 'Student Engagement and Retention Officer' (University of Huddersfield), 'Student Support Officer' (University of Sheffield), and 'Transition and Retention Tutor' (University of Hull). The fact the latter is the dominant role type in the United States may partly explain the imbalance in professional development and research.

PILOT RESEARCH STUDY METHODOLOGY

A pilot study, in the form of an online survey (**Supplementary Appendix 1**), was undertaken to assess the views of those involved in the delivery and management of personal tutoring practitioners in the United Kingdom. The survey sought the views of participants in three areas. First, the relevance, adequacy, and usefulness of pre-existing standards. Second, the necessity for, and potential benefits of, distinct tutoring standards in addition to the skills and competencies which are associated with the new UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019]. Third, the extent to which they felt tutoring to be valued, rewarded, and recognized (before assessing the demand for separate professional recognition and how practice may benefit). This represents the order of the survey whereas in the subsequent discussion and data tables, the order of the first and second areas is reversed. These multiple areas were identified in the survey design due to their close relation. Given the width of this scope, the paper discusses the data pertaining to key elements of these broad and complex areas and thus represents a pilot for future work on additional related aspects.

The UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019] was published in February 2019 and the latest version, including professional recognition descriptors, in November of the same year when associated professional awards were initiated in pilot form by UKAT. The survey was undertaken between these two dates during July and August 2019.

Fifty-seven responses were received from participants representing 26 United Kingdom universities. Two respondents did not state their institution and one was from an international university. The research population was comprised of self-selecting members of UKAT (numbering approximately 240 at the time of the survey), a sector body constituting individuals engaged with personal tutoring and advising, whether that be as a practitioner, leader or in a related support role (see **Table 1**). A snowball sampling technique was used to gather responses and therefore some respondents may have been from outside UKAT.

The survey constituted 15 questions of different types: demographic (for role titles, institutions and role types), multiple choice (allowing for multiple responses), scaling/ranking, closed (with yes/no/don't know response options) and free text. Both the closed and scaling/ranking questions were accompanied by free text questions asking respondents to briefly explain their answers. The rationale for this, and the question types represented, reflected the intention to gain as much meaningful data as possible in a study seeking views on a subjective topic.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and an inductive coding approach was used to analyze the latter. Initial reading and annotation was followed by identification of themes and a subsequent thematic content analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2008).

THE NECESSITY AND USEFULNESS OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PERSONAL TUTORING AND ADVISING

To discuss the necessity and usefulness of discrete standards for personal tutoring, one needs to consider personal tutoring's importance and how they may help overcome the challenges it faces. In addition, the content of standards, in particular tutor skills and competencies, can be a key determiner of relevance and meaningfulness. Illustrated with relevant literature and findings from the pilot study, this section examines each of these three interlinked areas.

The Importance of Personal Tutoring at Policy, Institution, Practitioner, and Student Level

The support provided by an institution is judged by the metrics and objectives associated with the regulatory framework (OfS, 2018) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) established by the Higher Education and Research Act (2017): student retention, progression, and employability, a high quality academic experience and value for money (OfS, 2018, p. 4). Arguably vital in meeting these requirements, the increasing attention paid to personal tutoring is perhaps not surprising. Moreover, this focus is borne out of student-centered strategy following the 2012 increase in tuition fees and diversification of student needs resulting in HE institutions re-evaluating their relationship with students. The headlines from key research in the field convey a similar high level of importance. The comprehensive and seminal *What Works?* reports (Thomas, 2012; Thomas et al., 2017) affirm proactive holistic support through personal tutoring as the way to achieve the 'belonging' at the heart of student retention and success. The persistence of differences in student outcomes for 'at risk' groups in institutions (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015; OfS, 2019a,b; UUK/NUS, 2019) which universities are charged with addressing can be combatted through tutoring enabling student engagement and attainment of social and cultural capital (Mountford-Zimdars et al., 2015). An improved student experience and student success is attributed to good personal tutoring (Braine and Parnell, 2011; Battin, 2014; Pellagrino et al., 2015; McFarlane, 2016). It is important to retention and progression (Smith, 2008; Drake, 2011; Webb et al., 2017) and personal tutors can be influential in the final decision of students who are thinking of leaving (Bowden, 2008). Leach and Wang (2015) found those who receive good academic advising are twice as likely to prosper from positive wellbeing and be engaged in their professional careers at work. Given such a level of significance is placed on it then one would assume a

TABLE 1 | Role types of respondents.

	Personal Tutor/Personal Academic Tutor (%)	Advising Role Within Professional Services (%)	Managerial Role Related to Personal Tutoring and Advising (%)	Other (%)
What best describes your role (in relation to personal tutoring and advising)?	51	11	33	5

TABLE 2 | Responses to the question "Do you believe that it is necessary to establish professional standards for personal tutoring and advising?"

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't Know
Do you believe that it is necessary to establish professional standards for personal tutoring and advising?	**74**	**12**	**14**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	70	11	19
Advising role within professional services	80	0	20
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	78	11	11
Other	67	33	0

set of standards is necessary in order to undertake, measure and recognize the endeavor.

Almost three quarters of respondents (across role types) in the pilot study indeed believed it is necessary for professional standards for personal tutoring and advising to be established (see **Table 2**). Respondents' reasoning for this view included the importance of tutoring to students' transition to HE and wider experience as well as the associated need for professionalization.

The Challenges Facing Personal Tutoring and How Professional Standards May Help

Despite the significant evidence of value, and the fact nearly all academics will undertake personal tutoring at some point in their career (Mynott, 2016, p. 104), personal tutoring systems have been subject to chronic under-resourcing and described as 'in crisis' (Evans, 2009). The tension between sufficiently organizing personal tutoring and rapid expansion was voiced over 20 years ago (Rivis, 1996, p. 46). More recent reports have articulated unmet student needs and limited academic and pastoral support (National Audit Office, 2007; House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, 2008) leading institutions to review their tutorial structures and provision. Time pressures associated with these tensions may explain the 'academic research desert' of personal tutoring (Thomas, 2018, p. x) and, specifically, the scarcity of studies from those actually undertaking the role (Ghenghesh, 2018), a group engaged by this pilot study. Habley's (2009) summary of advising in the United States may equally apply to the current United Kingdom context:

> '…to date, a unique and credible body of *knowledge* is non-existent, *evidence supporting the impact of advising* is insufficient, and a coherent and widely delivered *curriculum* for advising is currently unavailable.' [my italics]
>
> (p. 82)

Although the pilot study's scope does not encompass all the aspects which comprise tutoring 'knowledge,' 'impact evidence,' and 'curriculum,' its findings illustrate that standards could have a significant part to play in furthering each of these. Respondents felt personal tutoring 'knowledge' would be enhanced by the greater visibility, awareness of best practice (and limiting poor practice) that standards produce thus improving buy-in and recognition from individual academics. They could set boundaries for staff, students and the institution and manage expectations of students. Others believed it would generate 'impact evidence' through showcasing and, just as the UK PSF sets professional standards in teaching and the associated results are considered important and recognized, this development similarly, 'has the potential to raise standards of tutoring practice across the sector.' Further perceived benefits included promotion of an aspirational approach and potential increased retention and attainment resulting from greater student resilience (with associated HE market and societal benefits). Others believed it would aid with work load and help gauge how local requirements stand up to sector recommendations thus being beneficial at student, practitioner and institutional level. Respondents' views on the inclusion of specified skills, competencies and behaviors that comprise aspects of the UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019] – which can be seen to relate to 'curriculum' – is analyzed in a following section.

Four respondents felt standards are abstract, a guide only, not related to day-to-day practice, and are too reductive and rigid for the multi-faceted personal tutor role. Some suggested that any benefit would not be felt if 'it's a prescriptive tool.' Such concern over whether establishing a unifying set of principles represents a reductive and unhelpful 'one size fits all' approach to diverse contexts is understandable but does not necessarily negate the need. 'There is no single correct approach' to tutoring (Ridley, 2006, p. 132), something that can equally be said of teaching where standards are well established. Referring to the models and provision of personal tutoring in light of the diverse student body, the literature recommends flexibility (Gidman et al., 2000; Sosabowski et al., 2003; Grey and Osborne, 2018) and tailoring to needs, whether they be those of the institution, programme, or student (Atkinson, 2014; Battin, 2014; Grey and Osborne, 2018). If an ethos of 'freedom within a framework' is used, professional standards for tutoring can exhibit the same characteristics.

Further valid scrutiny of standards arises from asking what purpose, or purposes, they have. Are they used to assess, evaluate, measure impact, or support? Data gathered from the survey on pre-existing standards pertinent to the personal tutoring role elicited their general use for guidance and regulatory policy rather than delivery thus suggesting a particular interpretation of their purpose. This may also indicate that there is an absence of published institutional 'standards' for tutoring which represent a baseline for measuring professional tutoring and advising practice. In United States academic advising, 'assessment' is concerned with overall institutional delivery whereas 'evaluation' is focused on the performance of an individual academic advisor (Robbins and Zarges, 2011). It is important to emphasize that assessment/evaluation and support/value are not the polar opposites they may seem. It can be argued that the practitioner derives satisfaction from knowing what they are doing and that it is effective and, as a result, feel supported. Moreover, given the importance of the role and impact it can have, a level of scrutiny is to be expected.

Reasons given by some respondents who were skeptical about any benefits which standards would accrue included questioning whether they would improve institutional recognition, 'Doubtful. We have standards for other practices. They are not associated with recognition in any way.' Culture change is needed and professional recognition (associated with standards) will not necessarily result in changed practice and better personal tutoring. One respondent felt 'there are already enough in place' and fears it would represent an officious task were expressed by others, 'it would create yet another layer of bureaucratic box-ticking.' Another believed an additional set is potentially 'overwhelming.'

What Skills and Competencies Should Populate Professional Standards for Personal Tutoring?

As can be seen, explanations of the need and demand for standards are very much linked to their relevance and meaningfulness which, in turn, can be determined by the skills and competencies which populate them. Previous studies highlight the concerns and gaps in support expressed by tutors and therefore, by implication, suggest the most relevant elements of content for standards. Primary among them are role definition, clarification and induction, boundary setting, and training on pastoral support (Owen, 2002; Ridley, 2006; Stephen et al., 2008; McFarlane, 2016; Hart-Baldridge, 2020; Walker, 2020).

Two United States-based studies identified interpersonal, communication and listening skills as essential competencies (among a wide variety) for entry-level academic advisors (Menke et al., 2018) and advising for the future, helping students navigate systems and empowering students to be the key responsibilities according to faculty advisors (Hart-Baldridge, 2020). Further sources give us a picture of tutoring functions and influence from which skills and competencies can be extrapolated. Personal tutoring facilitates the social integration, through engagement and belonging, upon which student success relies (Beard et al., 2007). The relationship students have with academic staff is most important for nurturing belonging (Thomas, 2012, pp. 17–18). As personal tutors, they can enable students to perceive they are part of an academic community and that this is as important as the academic content of programs (McCary et al., 2011). They are 'cultural navigators who teach students the language... and help them acclimatize to the academic environment' (Miller, 2016, p. 45), thus facilitating academic integration (Leach and Wang, 2015). Tutoring is important to personal and professional development (Smith, 2008). These research findings and the examples contained within the National Academic Advising Association's (NACADA) 'Core Competencies' (2017c) informed the development of the UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019] which focuses on 'knowledge,' 'skills,' and 'understanding' (see **Supplementary Appendix 2**). Of the three components, 'Conceptual,' 'Informational,' and 'Relational' (the fourth 'Professional' component was added after the survey took place), those descriptors most closely representing skills and competencies (six of the seven 'Relational' aspects for example) were included in the survey with participants asked to judge their relevance (see **Table 3**).

TABLE 3 | Responses to the question "Which specific skills, competencies and behaviors do you think should be included in any standards for personal tutoring and academic advising?"

Which Specific Skills, Competencies and Behaviors Do You Think Should Be Included in Any Standards for Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising? Please Select All Which Apply.	**Response (%)**
Core values of personal tutoring and advising	91
Build tutoring and advising relationships with students	91
Communication skills relevant to tutoring with students	87
Plan and conduct successful tutoring and advising interactions	80
Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting	79
Collaborate effectively with professional services tocprovide support to students	77
Theory relevant to personal tutoring and advising	61
Institutional informational knowledge	56
Promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of the curriculum	56
Other	9

Survey respondents deemed the UKAT related descriptors as highly relevant and broad agreement with the specified skills, competencies and behaviors is underlined by the fact only 8.8% of respondents chose 'other.' In addition, McGill et al. (2020) recently found the views of 17 North American leaders in Advising on the professionalization of academic advising 'illuminate aspects' of the UKAT framework (p. 8). The suggestions accompanying the 'other' category were 'CPD, e.g., on mental health training,' 'empowering students to take ownership and responsibility' and 'coaching.' Arguably, this small number of additions outlined by participants is covered in the specified descriptors. Further detail in the form of reasons why could be elicited in future study.

THE RELEVANCE AND USEFULNESS OF PRE-EXISTING STANDARDS FOR PERSONAL TUTORING

A number of pre-existing standards can be viewed as pertinent to personal tutoring in HE. The most prominent of these are discussed here: the aforementioned *United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE* (UK PSF; Advance HE, 2011), The National Union of Students (NUS) *Academic Support Benchmarking Tool* (NUS, 2015a) and *Charter on Personal Tutors* (NUS, 2015b), the National Occupational Standards for Personal Tutoring

TABLE 4 | Responses regarding the relevance of pre-existing standards to personal tutoring and advising.

	Which Current Standards/Frameworks Do You Think Are Relevant to Personal Tutoring and Advising?(%) Please Select All Which Apply.
United Kingdom professional standards framework	72
National occupational standards for personal tutoring	39
National union of students (NUS) academic support benchmarking tool	42
Your institution's standards/framework	75
Other	5
Not aware of any relevant standards/framework	12

(NOS) (Learning and Skills Improvement Service, 2013), and NACADA's 'Core Competencies' (2017c).

The UK PSF is nationally recognized and commonly known, perhaps unsurprisingly given it underpins the two awards necessary for teaching in HE, Postgraduate Certificates and HEA Fellowship. Given the assumed undertaking of personal tutoring alongside an academic teaching role, the question of its relevance and sufficiency for the role needs posing. Advance HE's definition of the UK PSF references 'HE teaching and *learning support*' [my italics] (Advance HE, n.d., online) and 'supporting learning' occurs in the title of the standards itself. However, despite the inclusion of the descriptor 'approaches to student support and guidance' (Advance HE, 2011, p. 3), this stops short of specific reference to personal tutoring and its associated skills and requirements. The remaining 'Areas of Activity,' A1, 2, 3, and 5, relate to teaching. The dimension 'professional values' incorporates 'respect individual learners,' 'promote participation . . . and equality of opportunity for learners' (Advance HE, 2011, p. 3). Their relevance and sufficiency for tutoring may be a matter of interpretation and depend on one's view of the complex relationship between teaching and personal tutoring. However, recent studies have identified personal tutoring's specific requirements and skills, in terms of tutoring approach (signposting, non-directive and directive), levels of support for students (McFarlane, 2016), setting boundaries, effective one-to-one conversations including coaching and supporting 'at risk' and 'vulnerable' students (Walker, 2020). Such particulars are not covered by the UK PSF and arguably only partially by the other standards considered here, whereas the UKAT framework references connected specific skills under its 'relational' component, for example:

> 'empathetic listening and compassion . . . be accessible in ways that challenge, support, nurture, and teach . . . communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner . . . motivate, encourage and support students . . . plan and conduct successful tutoring interactions . . . facilitate problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and goal setting . . . collaborate effectively with campus services to provide support to students.'
>
> UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019, p. 4 (for full list, see **Supplementary Appendix 2**).

Of the pre-existing standards listed in the pilot study survey, the UK PSF and the standards of respondents' own institutions were felt to be most relevant to tutoring and advising practice with the NOS and the NUS *Academic Support Benchmarking Tool* being relevant according to approximately 40% of respondents (see **Table 4**). However, multiple respondents viewed the UK PSF as not having enough detail with no reference to tutoring theory, skills and competencies. **Table 5** shows views of respondents on the adequacy and sufficiency of pre-existing standards. Some explained the inadequacy of the UK PSF for tutoring by making the link with HEA fellowship. In their view, discussing tutoring is not a necessity for conferring HEA fellowship and one cannot achieve beyond Associate Fellow of the HEA based solely on tutoring and advising practice thus making 'the UK PSF of particularly little use for recognizing effective tutoring/advising practice for professional (primary role) advisors.'

Two respondents stated that the UK PSF was used for personal tutoring (as part of overall academic practice) and that their institutional framework reflects this. One respondent felt that the UK PSF's Area of Activity 4 'does prompt me to reflect on my personal tutoring.' Also, according to another, the UK PSF was utilized when tutoring provided evidence in an HEA fellowship application; however, another felt this evidence can only ever be partial. A further respondent stated that the NUS tool was useful in evidencing academic advising provision with students (the comparison to staff perspectives proving beneficial) and had been used to create a simpler institutional version. Three respondents viewed certain elements of the UK PSF as useful.

Interestingly, one respondent explains the gap of skills and competencies as resulting from a lack of clarity over where personal tutoring should be positioned in relation to professional service functions and teaching duties, issues discussed later in the paper:

> 'The United Kingdom professional standards framework and national occupation [sic] standards both have issues in that they don't specifically conceive or make allowances for personal tutoring as teaching rather than just a professional function, or of it as [a] form of teaching and learning distinct to other classroom learning because it is one-on-one and about self-development.'

The NUS *Academic Support Benchmarking Tool* (NUS, 2015a) and *Charter on Personal Tutors* (NUS, 2015b) outline principles of an effective tutoring service and process from a student perspective with the latter arising from a student survey. The charter proposes that tutoring should 'be adaptable (tailored) to students' needs,' 'support both academic and personal development' and 'set mutual expectations [between

TABLE 5 | Responses regarding the adequacy and sufficiency of pre-existing standards to personal tutoring and advising.

	To What Extent Do You Think These Standards Are Adequate and Sufficient for Personal Tutoring and Advising Practice?			*To What Extent Do You Believe These Standards Are Useful for Personal Tutoring and Advising Practice?*		
	More than adequate (%)	**Moderately adequate (%)**	**Not adequate (%)**	**Very useful (%)**	**Moderately useful (%)**	**Not useful (%)**
United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework	21	59	20	22	59	20
National Occupational Standards for Personal Tutoring	33	60	7	34	52	14
National Union of Students (NUS) Academic Support Benchmarking Tool	32	58	10	37	50	13
Your institution's standards/framework	33	56	11	23	68	9
Other	17	50	33	25.0	50	25.0

staff and students]' (NUS, 2015b, p. 2), therefore going some way to referencing skills and competencies. Interestingly, the charter states, 'staff should be given full training on being an effective personal tutor' (NUS, 2015b, p. 2) thus echoing the aforementioned research on staff perceptions.

Tutoring standards at a national level do exist in the form of the comprehensive *National Occupational Standards for Personal Tutoring (NOS)* (Learning and Skills Improvement Service, 2013). Despite being positioned to apply across sectors, they originated in further education and therefore the extent to which they are used in the HE sector is questionable. Nevertheless, they represent a thorough scoping of the role and are a useful tool for both populating group tutorial content and measuring the impact of tutoring (Lochtie et al., 2018, pp. 123–127, 189–191). However, they are not linked to formal accreditation for qualification to teach in a particular sector. Grey and Osborne's (2018) effective tutoring principles make some reference to skills in a similar way to the NUS (2015b) charter but are primarily for institutional personal tutoring systems and structure thus representing an evaluation tool for universities.

The NOS and the NUS benchmarking tool had less relevance for respondents (approximately 40%) as shown in **Table 4**. Reasons given included that, in the views of some, as unrelated to both institutional organization of tutoring and individual tutoring practice, they lack sufficient detail. On the positive side, three respondents believed that that the NUS tool was detailed and useful for tutoring.

With its longer history of professionalization of the role, perhaps the closest existing provision of standards for personal tutor competencies and attributes comes from the United States in the form of NACADA's three 'pillars'. The 'Concept' (NACADA, 2017a) aims to define the role, the 'Core Values' (NACADA, 2017b) describe seven key attributes of the Academic Advisor and the 'Core Competencies' (NACADA, 2017c) are organized into three areas: 'conceptual,' 'informational,' and 'relational.' NACADA also endorses the 'Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising' produced by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), a consortium of professional associations in higher education (CAS, 2018). No such national standard is defined by United Kingdom regulatory bodies (Grey and Osborne, 2018, p. 2), such as the Office for Students (OfS).

NACADA's competency areas mirror the content of training for academic advisors in the United States (King, 2000). While many of the elements of this professional guidance are useful to United Kingdom personal tutoring practice, its full application and sufficiency for the British context can be questioned. The guidance has arisen from the United States context where models of academic advising include those whose entire role is advising whereas in the United Kingdom undertaking personal tutoring alongside academic duties is prevalent. Partly due to its basis in the *in loco parentis* moral tutor system used in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge since the 16th century, the United Kingdom personal tutor role can have a larger scope than the NACADA classifications (Grey and Osborne, 2018, p. 2). This is exemplified by the fact that, although there is much common content between them and the aforementioned UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019], the latter has the additional fourth 'professional' component (added after the survey was undertaken) which references supportive environments, student diversity, professional development, and quality assurance [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019; p. 3]. NACADA does refer to some of these areas but within their 'Core Values' (NACADA, 2017b) rather than as competencies.

Elements of effective personal tutoring systems have been outlined (Gordon and Habley, 2000; Owen, 2002; Morey and Robbins, 2011; Thomas, 2012; McFarlane, 2016) but do not extend to skills and competencies needed. This absence could explain the tacit understanding around the role (Stephen et al., 2008; McFarlane, 2016) and assumption it will 'come naturally' (Owen, 2002; Gubby and McNab, 2013) leading tutors to 'fall back on a variety of misguided historical practices' (Wootton, 2006, p. 115). Students not initiating contact has been explained by a lack of understanding of the role from their perspective (Malik, 2000).

McGill et al.'s (2020) recent study found the views of 17 NACADA leaders on the professionalization of academic advising reflected, and thus supported, the relevance of many significant aspects of the NACADA, UKAT, and NOS frameworks, in addition to the core values and skills of effective personal tutoring proposed by Lochtie et al. (2018).

Only approximately half of the participants responded to the free text question asking how pre-existing standards were used in personal tutoring which may reinforce the picture of limited specific use. As for the high level of relevance given to 'your own institution's standards,' along with the fact this was not explained by many may highlight a conflation of terminology, specifically, 'standards' with 'guidance' or 'policy' as discussed further later in the paper.

VALUE, RECOGNITION, AND REWARD ASSOCIATED WITH PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR PERSONAL TUTORING AND ADVISING

As is the case with the UK PSF for teaching, the standards being discussed here are connected to 'value,' 'reward' and 'recognition.' These terms have broad meanings and their interdependence, as well as the nuanced distinctions between them, need recognizing and an important point of interpretation can be applied to each: whether the perspective is individual or institutional. Moreover, 'recognition,' particularly if expressed as 'professional recognition' (as distinct from institutional recognition) generally denotes an associated professional qualification. It was expressed as 'professional recognition' in the wording of the pilot study's survey but, potentially, not all respondents made the link between professional recognition and qualification. As mentioned previously, at the time of the survey an associated qualification (through UKAT) was only in the pilot stage and therefore participants will not have been aware of this. The literature and survey responses speak to the connected nature of individual, institutional and sectoral (professional) interpretations.

The literature presents a picture of personal tutoring as invisible 'other' work for which there is a lack of reward and recognition. References to personal tutoring in academic job descriptions usually go no further than stating it must be undertaken as a role, with little or no information on skills and competencies given. In the United States, faculty advising 'has generally been an extra job added on to the teaching work load' (Raskin, 1979, p. 101), a point made some time ago but Hart-Baldridge's (2020) recent findings of the principal challenges for faculty advising – 'advising as an isolated initiative,' 'unclear expectations,' and 'workload (in)equity' (pp. 15–16) – suggest that the situation has not radically changed.

A perception of under-valued, under-recognized, and under-rewarded personal tutoring at both institutional and sector level emerged from the survey findings (see **Table 6**). This was particularly marked at the institutional level amongst those in an advising role within professional services and is in contrast to the value which students and individual practitioners themselves place on the role. There is 'no reward or acknowledgment' and it is 'viewed as a burden rather than a privilege.' Regarding sectoral recognition, 'I don't think there is enough national focus on this part of the role.' Tutors desire institutional recognition (Luck, 2010) and its absence, combined with excessive workloads and ineffectual staff development, explains issues with personal tutoring delivery, rather than this being the fault of students or tutors themselves (Huyton, 2009). Students believe that for effective tutoring to take place, it 'should be recognized in staff reward and recognition schemes' (NUS, 2015b, p. 2).

Tutors' reference to colleagues' mixed commitment to the role in comparison to their other duties (Stephen et al., 2008; Walker, 2020) implies varied individual value, which, in turn, could be explained by varied institutional value. Personal tutoring should be valued by institutions at the same level as teaching, research and other scholarly activities (Robbins, 2012; Battin, 2014; McFarlane, 2016) if tutors are to prioritize it and believe that it will enhance their careers (Trotter, 2004; Stephen et al., 2008). Advisors must know training is an institutional priority, be offered incentives and if it is not evident, they may be resistant to engage and prefer to spend time on activities linked to their own professional recognition (King, 2000). The United States experience tells us that academic advisors work harder when they are appreciated and rewarded in meaningful ways for their work and positive reinforcement promotes natural enjoyment which results in good performance (McClellan, 2016). Assessing and evaluating personal tutoring sends the message that it is important and valued (Cuseo, 2015). The lack of this at most institutions (Creamer and Scott, 2000; Smith, 2008), possibly due to the challenge posed by tutoring's complexity (Lynch, 2000; Smith, 2008; Anderson, 2017), reinforces reduced value.

With almost two-thirds of respondents answering positively, a theme of professional recognition being wanted and needed emerged (see **Table 7**). However, with almost a third of overall participants responding 'don't know,' some uncertainty is evident and differences of views by role type emerged with 100% of those in an advising role within professional services believing it

TABLE 6 | Responses regarding value, reward, and recognition of personal tutoring and advising.

	Not valued/Recognized/ Rewarded (%)	Moderately Valued/ Recognized/Rewarded (%)	Highly Valued/ Recognized/Rewarded
Do you feel valued by your institution as a personal tutor or academic advisor?	**31**	**56**	**13**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	29	60	11
Advising role within professional services	50	25	25
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	18	64	18
Other	66	33	0
Do you believe that your practice and experience in personal tutoring and advising is recognized and/or rewarded within your institution?	**49**	**40**	**11**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	50	43	7
Advising role within professional services	80	20	0
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	26	55	19
Other	66	33	0
Do you believe that your practice and experience in personal tutoring and advising is recognized and/or rewarded more widely in the higher education sector?	**56**	**43**	**2**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	54	43	3
Advising role within professional services	25	75	0
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	59	41	0
Other	66	33	0

TABLE 7 | Responses regarding the need for professional recognition of personal tutoring and advising.

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't Know (%)
Do you believe that professional recognition is needed for personal tutors and advisors?	**65**	**9**	**26**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	57	11	32
Advising role within professional services	100	0	0
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	61	6	33
Other	66	33	0
Do you believe that establishing professional standards for personal tutoring and advising would improve the recognition of personal tutoring and advising within your institution?	**63**	**25**	**12**
Responses to above question by role			
Personal tutor/personal academic tutor	52	22	26
Advising role within professional services	100	0	0
Managerial role related to personal tutoring and advising	74	0	26
Other	33	33	34

is needed and would improve institutional recognition. Diverse opinions on this topic were also expressed. The majority of survey participants conveyed the positive effects they believed professional recognition would have. This perception was expressed in terms of greater motivation and perceived value, a raised profile for tutoring, and parity of esteem with the other duties of academics, primarily teaching and research. They believed specific skills are involved and therefore the role should be recognized and rewarded. According to one respondent, tutors should be 'recognized for their impact in this field [pedagogy].' Another two participants felt that standards would incentivise practitioners to perform this role to a higher level, help address where the role wasn't being done at all and that industry responds to professional recognition.

Those who were not sure or didn't think professional recognition of tutoring was needed stated that teaching excellence covers it already, with one respondent uncertain whether it should be 'separated out' and asking 'Perhaps the UK PSF should just have more emphasis on it?' Participants referenced tutoring's subordinate status, described variously as 'a minor part . . . a bolt on' and a 'hybrid' role, which meant few would see it as something which needs recognition. Interestingly, this contrasts to the positive responses arguing that recognition is precisely what is needed to address tutoring's inferior standing. Such recognition is arguably the stimulus for overcoming this barrier to progress, a reasoning which is echoed in the literature reviewed. Despite the apparent greater focus on professionalization in the United States, the comparable role of 'faculty advisor' seems to face similar issues, with a lack of reward and recognition resulting in academics giving it less importance (Reinarz, 2000). This may be explained by the fact no professional qualification is offered to faculty advisors, although Master's courses in Advising do exist which mainly primary role advisors undertake. Similarly, reward and recognition is more prevalent among the latter with academic faculty advisors rarely rewarded or encouraged (McClellan, 2016). Future research could focus further on the correlation between the relative status of tutoring in the overall role of an 'academic' and other perceptions, for example the purpose and importance of tutoring.

In addition to the raised profile and importance in common with previous answers, further reasons for positive responses included demonstration of the associated skill set and providing a benchmark. The statement 'Tutoring has a unique combination of skills and competencies so should have [its] own framework of qualification clearly!' provides a further contrast to the aforementioned views (in response to this and other questions) of tutoring as a corresponding or ancillary activity to teaching.

Perhaps inevitably, variations between how respondents felt about management within their respective institutions on this matter were evident. The view from one participant that 'senior management of my institution see a clear link between recognition of personal tutoring and the ability to use [this] as evidence for TEF submissions (in same way as HEA fellowship is used as evidence) to advance TEF aspirations' clearly contrasts with another: 'management wouldn't care – only if it affected recruitment and reputation.' However, one could argue that the TEF is one such determinant of recruitment and reputation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study acts as a pilot, in part due to a number of limitations. This section discusses these limitations as they pertain to the study in its entirety, and offers several general suggestions for further research. In the following conclusion, implications of the findings on the various aspects of the study are presented and further, more specific opportunities for research proposed.

Fifty-seven responses were received but these came from only 26 different United Kingdom higher education institutions (HEIs). Of the eight universities having multiple respondents, responses from three of these accounted for 39% of total responses thus potentially skewing the results. However, analyzing the responses to the key question of whether professional standards for personal tutoring and advising are necessary with responses from these institutions excluded makes no significant difference (varying by 3.4%). The initial distribution of the survey to the members of UKAT and the fact participants were self-selecting meant respondents were likely to be those most engaged in personal tutoring and invested in improving practice. Therefore, both the claim that the institutions involved were representative of United Kingdom universities and that the individual respondents were representative of the range of views on personal tutoring within his or her institution can be contested.

Given the diversity of views found among the relatively limited research population, work to examine what informs such perceptions would seem to be necessary. Therefore, future research could explore the latent variables in the perceptions of tutors about the role which may rely on a larger research population and potentially wider ranging survey.

The content of the questions was based on the issues most evident from the literature. The high percentage of positive responses to these suggest most respondents aspire to improve the profile and practice of personal tutoring identified in previous research thus reflecting the membership of UKAT. The questions' formats were designed specifically for this study, with the inclusion of free text 'explain your answer' options linked to closed, scaling/ranking and multiple choice questions intended to maximize meaningfulness through qualitative data complementing quantitative data. Explanations were optional not compulsory and had completion rates of between 60 and 88% except for one question whose 49% completion rate is potentially explained due to it asking for explanations only from those who use existing standards in personal tutoring practice. It is argued that this gleaned significant findings which are of use and interest to those engaged in personal tutoring and the sector more widely. However, potentially other data collection methods, such as focus groups, could have extended this significance.

Moreover, the study is potentially restricted by the relatively limited response rate and short research period. However, arguably, the survey reached those most engaged in personal tutoring practice who were thus best placed to answer. In addition, these respondents were from across the sector employed in both modern and 'red brick' HEIs and therefore a reasonably wide evidence base was achieved. Briefly referenced in responses, the absence of student perspectives on these standards is a further specific limitation of the study, particularly in light of their lack of understanding of the role (Malik, 2000), and incorporating such would be a useful extension and develop the work undertaken by the NUS survey which led to its *Charter on Personal Tutors* (NUS, 2015b).

CONCLUSION – IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Based on theory and data, support for the establishment, and relevance, of bespoke standards for personal tutoring and advising in the United Kingdom HE context – in particular as represented by the new UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019] – is evident. The review of relevant literature undertaken highlights this need and is underlined by the findings of the pilot study which surveyed a selection of those undertaking, and being responsible for, these roles across the sector. Justifications for this convey that such a development would help positively address the fundamental tensions and contradictions of personal tutoring in the current HE climate across individual, institutional, and sector levels, namely standardization, professionalization, recognition (both 'institutional' and 'professional' through accreditation), status, and value. It is important to acknowledge that this demand was not felt across all survey respondents but was in the majority. Many questioned the relevance, adequacy and usefulness of pre-existing sectoral standards for personal tutoring, therefore reinforcing the overall conclusion, while some argued the opposite and raised issues around the effectiveness of standards generally.

The Embedding of Standards and Professional Recognition

As previously mentioned, the NACADA (2017c) 'Core Competencies,' informed the development of the UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019], included in **Supplementary Appendix 2**, and Professional Recognition Scheme. At the time of the study the former was newly published and the latter in pilot form. In line with the conceptions of the role highlighted by this study, these standards aim to serve both the personal tutor undertaking the role as part of an academic post and the professional personal tutor or advisor. An evaluation of the usefulness, value, effectiveness, and impact of this framework (and the newly associated qualification) would be a worthwhile future research activity. The matters professionals feel are most pertinent to standards as provided by this study – namely clarity of purpose, flexibility, practical application, incorporation of guidance and links to meaningful recognition and value – could be used as criteria in such an assessment. Student outcomes would be a further important criterion for inclusion here.

The 'Meaningfulness' of Standards

Care needs to be taken to ensure standards are meaningful to the practitioner, institutions, and the sector. Inclusion of relevant skills, competencies and behaviors provides an important way of achieving this. The majority view in the pilot study that personal tutoring is a discrete exercise with a particular skill set aligns with previous research (McFarlane, 2016; Walker, 2020). The broad functions of personal tutoring, which imply the skills required, have been extrapolated from the literature. The survey goes some way to assessing and validating the new UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019] through respondents' corroboration of the relevance of specific skills and behaviors contained within it, for example, communication skills, problem solving, goal setting, and collaboration with professional services. Further assessment could be provided by future research into the application of the framework and impact on practice.

Other important ways of affording 'meaningfulness,' resulting in practitioners valuing the standards themselves, are highlighted by the literature and this pilot study. While the concern which emerged from the findings that standards and frameworks equate to 'one size fits all' is a legitimate one, perhaps particularly so in relation to personal tutoring's diverse contexts, it is overcome by flexibility and relevance. The diversity of teaching contexts and yet existence and use of established associated professional standards underlines this.

The assertion expressed by a minority in the study, that producing more standards will not have the desired impact and, by implication, meaning, can be contested. Associated with this view, the call for 'guidance' rather than 'standards' by some respondents may highlight the negative association of the latter caused by previous experiences or a misunderstanding of terminology or purpose. Standards, if linked to nationally recognized qualification, can represent a minimum 'threshold' or 'benchmark' for practice and therefore have a wider purpose than 'guidance.' Arguably, standards can include 'guidance' within them but 'guidance' in itself does not represent standards. Indeed, when conceived of as a benchmark, as the UK PSF is for teaching (Turner et al., 2013, p. 50), assessment against such standards would convey a minimum level of good practice. At the time of the survey, professional qualification linked to the UKAT framework was only in the pilot stage, but now that a recognition scheme has been developed, its effectiveness in providing a benchmark merits further research.

Value, Recognition, and Reward

In terms of the value, recognition, and reward with which personal tutoring standards could be associated, to some extent the responses reflected the complex definitions of these, in addition to the different, although interdependent, perspectives of the individual, institutional and sectoral. While space does not allow for a detailed discussion of these nuances here, a number of interesting themes emerged.

While the skepticism from some about reward systems related to tutoring is not new (Arnold et al., 1998; Deci et al., 2001; Lawler, 2008; McClellan, 2016), specific claims that standards would not improve, or are not associated with, institutional recognition emerged. This can be challenged through appreciating the parallels with the UK PSF and HEA fellowship (outlined previously) which are recognized in institutional metrics. Fellowship provides a required benchmark and thus arguably instigates cultural change, and an associated change in the practice of teaching and learning. Therefore, using personal tutoring standards such as the UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019], as proposed by this study, offers a corresponding development for the important work of tutoring and advising.

A crucial differentiator would seem to be recognition conceived of as *professional* recognition and associated qualification, specifically through an evidence-based assessment mapped to the standards. As a consequence of such sectoral recognition, improvement in institutional recognition and the associated benefits for personal tutoring would follow. Greater commitment would transpire, the survey response: 'without professional recognition tutors will not seek to improve their practice' here echoing the prioritization cited as a benefit by King (2000) and Stephen et al. (2008). Those respondents' view that no positive effect will be felt could suggest that not all made the key link between standards and professional qualification (and thus professional recognition). Future study could clearly emphasize evidence-based retrospective assessment against personal tutoring standards (leading to a professional recognition qualification), which UKAT has now developed, and investigate the effect on improving quality and practice.

Further research comparable to past work which investigated the impact on practice from teaching professional standards/accreditation, primarily the UK PSF and associated HEA fellowship (Turner et al., 2013; Botham, 2018; Spowart et al., 2019), would be valuable. The questioning of the correlation between standards and impact evident from this work does not justify halting the endeavor of embedding personal tutoring standards. Indeed, as respondents in the pilot study expressed, any future assessment of impact can only take place if these standards are actually utilized.

The fact equivalent assessments of teaching standards 'suggest a split in sector opinion as to whether engagement with the UK PSF benefits learning and teaching practice' (Botham, 2018, p. 166) and provide 'mixed evidence' (Botham, 2018, p. 166) has not resulted in rejection of standards and affords lessons which can be learned for their personal tutoring counterpart. Among these is a key finding from Spowart et al. 's (2019) cross-institutional study on how HEA fellowship impacts on participants' teaching development: 'caution must be taken to ensure that the professional development opportunities offered by [HEA] accreditation schemes are fully realized' (p. 1299). More positively, Turner et al.'s (2013) research across eight HEIs found the impact of the UK PSF 'has been significant in most institutions and for many institutional staff' (p. 50) and is used in a 'myriad of ways' (p. 50) including

> 'to underpin initial and continuing professional development, to influence learning and teaching and related strategies, to act as a national benchmark, to provide an aspiration for staff, to underpin promotion and probation policies, and to change the language of learning and teaching.'
>
> (p. 50)

These echo the potential benefits both expressed by many participants in this study and inferred from the literature in the context of personal tutoring and further reinforce the argument for their adoption.

The Relationship Between Teaching and Personal Tutoring

In the context of examining the relevance of teaching standards, this study contributes to an under-researched area: the important question of the relationship between personal tutoring and teaching. The complexity of this relationship is reflected in the diverse opinions which were expressed, for example, the minority view of tutoring as a marginal or hybrid role subordinate to teaching, contrasting with the more commonly held view of its significance. The former view, expressed by those who believed professional recognition of tutoring is not necessary, can be contested by the fact that, although personal tutoring is not explicitly referenced in the TEF, it contains criteria referring to personalized learning and student support to which personal tutoring directly relates. Since evidence from personal tutoring practice could be used to support TEF claims against these criteria then, arguably, it is sufficiently important and separate professional recognition is a necessity.

A further relationship, that between tutoring as part of an academic position and a separate 'professional tutor' role (mirroring 'faculty' and 'primary role' advisors in the United States), was highlighted by the findings. This was exemplified by an additional view which emerged, that tutoring standards are necessary but would need to situate the role as a mode of teaching, rather than as a separate 'professional tutor' activity. Building on this research, and the small number of other previous studies which highlight and discuss these relationships (Stork and Walker, 2015, pp. 7–9; Lochtie et al., 2018, pp. 9–14), would be a fruitful avenue for future work.

The increasing importance of personal tutoring at sectoral, institutional, individual practitioner and student level has not produced the requisite advance in professionalization. The adoption of discrete professional standards for this work would be a notable step toward resolving this unsatisfactory situation. While acknowledging the limitations of this study, and in combination with the literature reviewed, it is argued that the embedding of relevant personal tutoring standards, such as those represented by the new UKAT framework [UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT), 2019], is needed and justified through the associated improvements in support, development and recognition it could provide for this most crucial of roles.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/**Supplementary Material**, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Manchester Metropolitan University Business and Law Research Ethics and Governance Committee. Written informed consent was not required to participate in this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr. David Grey for his help in administering the survey.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.531451/full#supplementary-material

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 10 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00100

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The Development and Design of an Interactive Digital Training Resource for Personal Tutors

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This chapter details the development and design of an interactive digital training resource for personal tutors in the Arts Faculty at the University of Warwick in 2018. The Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Resource aimed to enhance staff and student experiences of personal tutoring. The training was designed and delivered through the open-source learning design tool H5P within the University of Warwick's Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle. The training resource content is delivered through a mixture of text, images, videos and links to further resources which introduce learners to personal tutoring policies, structures, processes, support, and best practice. The resource also contains interactive activities that enable learners to condense their learning, reflect on their personal tutoring knowledge and practice, and see their progress as they move through the different stages of the training. The resource was designed to be interactive to make the content as engaging as possible for learners and to promote the retention of knowledge. It was also designed with different learners' levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs in mind. This chapter outlines the context of the training's development, and the pedagogic approaches, methods and principles that informed the learning design. It also provides an account of the design process and a description of the training content. This case study demonstrates the value of online training and resources for supporting personal tutors by showing the positive impact that the Arts Faculty Personal Tutoring Training Resource has on staff and student experiences of personal tutoring at the University of Warwick. It also shows that personal tutors welcome online training and resources, and that online training is often preferred to face-to-face training because it can be used and accessed according to the requirement of users at any time.

Keywords: personal tutor, training, online, H5P, interactive

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
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Kansas State University, United States

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United Kingdom
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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to
Leadership in Education,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Education

Received: *24 January 2020*
Accepted: *03 June 2020*
Published: *10 July 2020*

Citation:
Woods K (2020) The Development and Design of an Interactive Digital Training Resource for Personal Tutors.
Front. Educ. 5:100.
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00100

INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the development and design of the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Resource for staff in the Arts Faculty at the University of Warwick in 2018. This training resource aimed to enhance staff and student experiences of personal tutoring, support the introduction of a new personal tutoring policy, and improve awareness of personal tutoring structures, processes, support, and student services. The resource was designed, and the content identified, in response to staff and student experiences of personal tutoring as detailed in the pedagogic literature and Warwick University's *Personal Tutoring Review* 2017. The personal tutor training was developed in Moodle, Warwick's Virtual Learning Environment. Within Moodle, most of the training content was designed in the open-source learning design tool H5P and delivered through a mixture of text, images, videos, and links to further resources. The learning resource also contains interactive formative assessment activities like quizzes and drag-and-drop question sets. These activities were designed to enable personal tutors to condense their learning, reflect on their knowledge and practice, identify areas for improvement, and track their progress as they move through the different stages of the training. The resource was designed with different learners' levels of digital literacy and accessibility needs in mind, and awareness of different degrees of familiarity with Warwick's personal tutoring system among users.

This chapter explores the context for the development of the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Resource in relation to changes in the Higher Education sector and the particular arrangements, cultures and practices of personal tutoring at the University of Warwick. It considers a range of pedagogic literature relating to personal tutoring and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). The paper also details the pedagogic approaches, principals and methods that informed the design of the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Resource, the content of the learning, and how it was implemented. The final part of the article provides an evaluation of the training resource and its impact on staff and student personal tutoring experiences. The article shows the positive influence that the resource has had on staff and student experiences of personal tutoring during its first year of implementation.

This case study demonstrates that interactive, multi-media online training that is designed with the needs of users in mind and developed through engagement with academic and professional service stakeholders, can have a positive influence on staff and student experiences of personal tutoring. It also shows that both staff and students welcome the development of digital and online personal tutor training and resources, and that in many cases well-designed and engaging digital provision is preferred to face-to-face training. This is because such training can be accessed whenever users require; whether they are about to undertake personal tutoring responsibilities for the first time, or they are experienced personal tutors looking for specific guidance on a particular personal tutoring related issue.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

A personal tutor is an advisor assigned to every student when they start University who provides academic and pastoral support during students course of study. In some institutions personal tutors are known as academic advisors. Personal tutor systems, common in many Higher Education institutions, aim to create a sense of student belonging and community, and support academic induction and individual student learning experiences (Wootton, 2006, p. 118). Generally speaking, personal tutors are expected to provide guidance on University governance, systems and processes, and support students in their academic, personal and professional development (Yale, 2019, p. 534–535). In practice, approaches to personal tutoring vary across and within institutions. Thomas has identified three different models of personal tutoring currently in operation: pastoral, professional and integrated (Thomas and Hixenbaugh, 2006, p. 21–31). In the pastoral model, academic staff provide personal and academic support, while in the professional model, personal tutoring is delivered by dedicated trained staff who are often based in professional services. In the integrated model, personal tutoring is timetabled as part of the curriculum and delivered by academics. Whatever the model, Stevenson suggests that personal tutoring is important part of University learning because it enables "students to make connections between the different elements of the learning experience" (Stevenson, 2009, p. 121).

Recent years have seen increased attention on personal tutoring delivery and experience in the UK Higher Education sector. Several universities, including Bath Spa University, Exeter University, Warwick University and Kings College London, have conducted significant reviews of personal tutoring in the last 10 years. These reviews have chiefly been concerned with improving personal tutoring within institutional contexts. There has also been growing pedagogic research interest in personal tutoring, especially since the establishment of UK Advising and Tutoring in 2015. In the collected editions *Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* (2006) and *Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education* (2018), pedagogic researchers have explored the purpose and effectiveness of personal tutoring in modern HE, showcased examples of good practice, and identified future trends. This research has revealed that the personal tutor is a "frequently hidden yet potentially significant figure in many students" learning experiences (Watts, 2011, p. 214). Recent interest in personal tutoring has been driven by an increasing focus on the results of the National Student Survey, the forthcoming subject-level Teaching Excellence Framework, expanding student numbers, and a growing focus on the student experience. At the same time, fee paying students have come to demand better personal tutor support and provision (Luck, 2010, p. 274). This has created a context where universities are seeking to enhance their personal tutoring provision for the improvement of the student experience (*Personal Tutoring Review*, 2017, p. 1).

Research has shown that there is often a gap between students' expectations of personal tutoring and their actual experiences. It has been suggested that this caused by lack of clarity around the nature and boundaries of the personal tutor-tutee relationship, and different staff ideologies about personal tutoring (Smith, 2008; Stephen et al., 2008; Watts, 2011). One Head of Department from the Arts Faculty at the University of Warwick suggests that there is:

> 'potential ambiguity between supporting students on the one hand but encouraging them to develop their own resilience and independence on the other [. . .] this can lead to essentially a proactive stance on the part of tutors or a responsive one.

I think some colleagues might feel that they shouldn't be too proactive in discovering whether students have problems' (*Personal Tutoring Review*, 2017, p. 15).

Lack of training for personal tutors has been identified as a key cause of confusion around the personal tutoring role and the maintenance of boundaries in personal tutoring relationships (McFarlane, 2016).

Multiple studies have shown that lack of specific personal tutor training is a widespread concern among personal tutors, with many reporting feeling unequipped and unsupported in relation to their personal tutoring related responsibilities (Owen, 2002; Gardner and Lane, 2010; McFarlane, 2016). Reflecting the views of many, in 2002 one personal tutor interviewed in research by Owen reported: "I think we do need some training. Sometimes, before you look round, students are into something really deep. I don't want to do counseling but I'd like to know how to receive their worries and when to stop them and refer on" (Owen, 2002, p. 15). As detailed in Gardner and Lane's auto-ethnography of their personal tutee-tutor relationship, students often come to personal tutors looking for support with complex, complicated and distressing issues, and tutors can feel out of depth in terms of knowing how to support appropriately, and where and how to draw boundaries (Gardner and Lane, 2010). Lack of training is widely reported to contribute to these feelings among academics. These feelings are also heighted by the added challenge academics face of balancing their personal tutoring responsibilities alongside teaching, research and administration (Barlow and Antoniou, 2007; Myers, 2008). A lack of investment in the development of personal tutor training can also lead staff to feel that their personal tutoring work is not properly valued by their institutions.

At the same time, students increasingly expect personal tutors to be required to undertake training before undertaking personal tutoring work (Owen, 2002, p. 19). This is revealed by comments from students who were part of a focus group on personal tutoring at the University of Warwick in 2017. One student noted: "Tutors need to be more aware or have some kind of training about the fact that students face all kinds of problems of their own, in particular with regards to mental health and personal difficulties." Another student plainly stated: "Personal tutors need some specific training!" (*Personal Tutoring Review,* 2017, p. 21).

On the basis of such evidence, many universities have begun to design and deliver personal tutor training and resources in recent years. The vast majority of these support resources are provided through online advice webpages or "toolkits." Many Universities, such as Aston University, Bath University, Bristol University and Loughborough University, have also started to provide personal tutor training sessions as part of the induction programmes for new staff (*Personal Tutoring Review,* 2017, Appendix 3). For the most part, this training is delivered through face-to-face in presentations or workshops. Some universities, such as the University of Sheffield, University of Surrey, Leeds Metropolitan University and Greenwich University, also offer face-to-face training as part of ongoing professional development training (*Personal Tutoring Review,* 2017, Appendix 3).

Yet, information about what these toolkit resources and face-to-face training sessions cover (and their effectiveness) is largely unclear due to lack of published information and evaluation of such interventions. It is likely that approaches vary considerably between institutions, and that their effectiveness differs accordingly. Indeed, at the UKAT conference in 2018, colleagues from across the sector showcased their different methods of personal tutor training revealing a variety of approaches. For example, in a workshop session Alison Braddock and Michael Draper from the University of Swansea Academy of Inclusivity and Learner Success (SAILS) invited attendees to participate in a sample of their new personal tutor training programme which aims to enhance practical personal tutoring skills through discussion of "what you would do" in relation to examples of real life wellbeing related scenarios that have previously been encountered by personal tutors. At the end of the session, several colleagues noted how different this was from the didactic presentation approach to personal tutor training employed in their own universities.

Furthermore, even in cases where the design and development of training has been documented, as in the case of Elaine Fisher's article on the e-learning module that she developed for personal tutors at the University of Westminster (Fisher, 2017), what is missing is evaluation of the training's pedagogic effectiveness, and the extent to which it enhanced staff and student experiences of personal tutoring. Therefore, although the Higher Education sector has recently begun to come to a consensus that personal tutor training is desirable and will likely lead to the improvement of personal tutoring experiences for staff and students, at present there is little evaluated evidence about "what works" and the impact that personal tutoring related professional development or training has on personal tutoring experiences. By providing an evaluated case study of the methods used in design and identification of content for an online personal tutor training resource at the University of Warwick, this chapter seeks to address this hole in the existing literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AIMS

This chapter will examine the development, design, and impact of online personal tutor training through a case study of a digital training resource for personal tutors that was developed for staff in the Arts Faculty at the University of Warwick in 2018. In the first instance, a case study is considered the best means of analysis because personal tutoring arrangements, purposes, and practices vary between institutions. Secondly, the case study approach is a useful means of identifying "what works" in practice because it enables in-depth analysis of the situational context and underlying principles which enabled a particular intervention to "work." Consequently, the case study analysis of the development and design of the online Arts Faculty Personal Tutor training provided in this chapter will enable identification of some general methods, principles and insights which may be useful for the development of similar resources in other contexts.

Personal tutoring has been a key teaching and learning support structure at the University of Warwick since it was established in 1965. At Warwick, personal tutoring is delivered through a pastoral model and sits within a broader institutional framework of centralized, well-resourced, and professional student support and development services. These services include wellbeing Support, Student Opportunity, Residential Life, and the Library. Although Warwick has set minimum expectations for personal tutoring delivery since 2012, personal tutoring is organized locally by departments. This organization creates variations in personal tutoring approaches, practices, and experiences, but is considered important to allow for disciplinary appropriate personal tutoring arrangements. In recent years there has been a significant increase in student numbers at Warwick, with the total number of undergraduate students growing 14% between 2012/12 and 2016/17, which has put pressures on the personal tutor system. In 2018, there were 2929 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts who were enrolled on courses across 9 departments (Classics and Ancient History, Global and Sustainable Development, English and Comparative Literary Studies, Film and Television Studies, History, History of Art, Liberal Arts, School of Modern Languages and Cultures, and School of Theatre and Performance Studies). In terms of staff, in 2018 there were 250 staff on contracts which made them eligible for undertaking personal tutoring responsibilities (although a portion of this number would not be expected to undertake personal tutoring due to research leave or fulfilling other senior administrative positions). The personal tutor to tutee ratio in the Arts departments at Warwick, taken over a 3-year average between 2014/15 and 2016/17, ranged between 3.6 to 17.8 (*Personal Tutoring Review*, 2017, Appendix 5).

The identification of clear learning aims for the resource was of vital importance in ensuring a focus for the project during the design process. In designing the training module by starting with learning aims and outcomes, I followed Biggs' educational design theory of constructive alignment (Biggs, 2011, p. 279–365).

Firstly, the learning aims for the resource were identified in response to evidence from staff and students about their experiences of personal tutoring. A major source of evidence was Warwick's Personal Tutoring Review, undertaken in 2017 by the Personal Tutoring Review Group, led by the Dean of Students, Professor Louise Gracia. Lack of training was identified as a key issue by the report. It was noted:

> 'providing clear guidance and training about the roles, responsibilities and boundaries of personal tutoring is essential for those managing and resourcing personal tutoring as well as those undertaking personal tutoring work. Such awareness raising permits not only shared good practice but also an institutional opportunity to begin to recognize the skill required in doing this well and the resource and reward that could/should be attached to it' (*Personal Tutoring Review*, 2017, p. 8).

A core recommendation of the review was the development of face-to-face Personal Tutor Basic Training and Personal Tutor Refresh Training. It was proposed that Personal Tutor Basic Training should be made compulsory for all new members of staff who had personal tutor responsibilities within the first year of their appointment. It was also proposed that Personal Tutor Refresh Training should made compulsory for all existing members of staff with personal tutoring responsibilities once every 3 years. The requirements for undertaking training were written into the new Personal Tutor role descriptor agreed by the Universities Senate and Council in 2018. Subsequently, the implementation of face-to-face Personal Tutor Refresh Training began at the beginning of the 2018/19 academic year, with the development of Personal Tutor Basic Training being identified as a key work-stream for the Dean of Students' Office in the same year.

The design and development of the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Online Training Resource aimed to support the implementation of the changes to the personal tutor role, the face-to-face training designed and delivered by the Dean of Students' Office, and the broader recommendations of the Personal Tutoring Review (for the full set of recommendations see the University of Warwick's *Personal Tutor Review,* 2017). Indeed, most of the content for the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Resource was developed from the Dean of Students' Office in-person training and materials, such as the Personal Tutor Meeting Checklist. These materials and their content were developed out of information gathered from staff and students during the Personal Tutoring Review. The Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Online Training aimed to support this in-person training by providing a form of personal tutor training that could be accessed at any time and was tailored to the specific needs and concerns of personal tutors from the Arts Faculty.

The particular needs of Arts Faculty personal tutors were identified from the Arts Faculty 2017 Institutional Review of Teaching and Learning (ITLR). This report noted that more effective integration of pastoral support and academic support should be a key area of work for the Faculty in advance of the next institutional review. Within the Faculty, the ITLR revealed wide variations in approaches to personal tutoring amongst staff. The Faculty ITLR recommended that the Faculty should agree a set of practice-based principles that the personal tutor should work to, the establishment of a clear set of boundaries for the role, and the better management of students' expectations of personal tutoring.

As the Arts Faculty Director of Student Experience, I was charged with addressing these issues and enhancing staff and student experiences of personal tutoring in line with the recommendations of the University's Personal Tutoring Review and the ITLR. Working with this remit, in May and June 2018 I conducted interviews with Senior Tutors, Heads of Department, and Directors of Student Experience in the Faculty of Arts to identify areas of good practice and identify a shared set of working principles for personal tutoring activities. These interviews, which were conducted informally to uncover candid responses, revealed that there were quite different approaches to personal tutoring in theory, practice and administration across and within the Faculty's departments, and a desire for greater consistency. They also revealed mixed awareness of the services offered by the University to support students. This evidence revealed the need to develop specific personal tutor training for

Arts Faculty staff to create greater consistency in approaches to personal tutoring and its administration across the Arts. In this sense, the Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training went beyond the scope of the Dean of Students' training, which largely focused on general good practice, communicating policy changes, and made allowances for variations in personal tutoring between departments.

Accordingly, the aims of the design and development of the Arts Faculty Personal Tutoring Resource were to:

- Provide training and resource materials for personal tutors that supported the implementation of the Personal Tutoring Review and training provided by the Dean of Students' Office;
- Create greater consistency in understandings of the expectations, boundaries and requirements of the personal tutor and the personal tutor-tutee relationship;
- Create a better understanding the administrative responsibly inferred on personal tutors and the principles of common regulatory policies;
- Create a better understanding of when and how to signpost students looking for specialist support, and how personal tutors could obtain personal tutoring guidance and support.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

From late June 2018, I started to develop a project to design an online personal tutor training for the Faculty of Arts. I decided to design the module as a digital resource to compliment the more general scenario and discussion based face-to-face training offered by the Dean of Students' Office. It was also decided to provide the training materials online so they could be accessed by personal tutors as and when they needed, thereby offering ongoing support. The decision to deliver the training online was also stimulated by the growing use of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) in HE, and a desire to promote it within the Faculty subsequent to the establishment of the Digital Arts Lab in early 2018.

There were six key design principles that underpinned the development of the Personal Tutor Training Resource that were identified early in the project's development. These design principles were used to shape the design of all aspects of the training and the individual learning objects, as well as the approaches to their creation. These design principles stipulated that the training should be:

1. Learner-centered and designed as a learning activity
2. Engaging, multimedia, and interactive
3. Designed with input from stakeholders from across the University
4. Accessible
5. Clearly structured and navigable
6. Developed in a flexible learning environment

The following section will outline how and why these design principles were considered important, and how they shaped the creation of the training resource. To design the resource, I firstly considered various aspects of Technology Enhanced Learning Design theory. To aid this, in April 2018 I enrolled on a postgraduate award in technology enhanced learning delivered by the Academic Development Centre. Technology Enhanced Learning, or E-learning, has a range of definitions, from those which narrowly focus on web technologies, to broader definitions which encompass any use of technology to support learning. It is this broader definition, outlined by Daly and Pachler, that is employed a here. They write that Technology Enhanced Learning is:

> 'A set of practices which enhance the potential of people to learn with others via technology-aided interaction, in contexts which can be "free" of barriers of time and place. It involves the utilization of a range of digital resources – visual, auditory, and text-based – which enable learners to access, create and publish material which services educational purposes… this material can be shared electronically with fellow learners and teachers both within and beyond the bounds of formal educational contexts' (Pachler and Daly, 2011, p. 217).

Using this definition, at the start of the project several core design principles were established. Design principles are the guidelines which inform design decision making and were of vital importance in the development of digital materials for this project.

The first design principle was that the training resource should be conceived as a learning activity, rather than didactic training, with learners (personal tutors) needs as the principal priority. It was accordingly decided that the training should be "user" focused rather than "delivery" focused in its design. In this sense, the resource was designed using the principles of learner-centered education. Learner-centered education is defined as:

> 'the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners - their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs - with a focus on learning - the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners' (McCombs and Whisler, 1997, p. 9).

Learner-centered education requires students to be active and responsible in their own learning. Wagner and McCombs suggest that "distance education provides a unique context in which to infuse learner-centered principles" (Wagner and McCombs, 1995, p. 32). Adoption of a learner-centered approach made sense for this project given the absence of a named "teacher" in the online training delivery model, and since the learners in this case were experienced educators with ample ability to be active and responsible for their learning.

The second design principle was that the training resource should be engaging and include a mixture of multimedia content and interactive activities. Research has shown that interactive online activities promote motivation and increase learning (Wilkinson and Lancaster, 2014; Khamparia and Pandey, 2017). Aldrich has also illustrated that interactive digital activities which enable "learning by doing" promote knowledge retention (Aldrich, 2005). This design principle was also connected to the learner-centered design principle in that learner-centered education emphasizes the value of constructive learning activities through which learners achieve understanding through discovery (Beetham and Sharpe, 2007, p. 29). In addition, it was decided that the activities should be as authentic as possible because Smart and Cappel's study of students' perceptions of online learning showed that authentic learning scenarios proved the most engaging for individual learners (Smart and Cappel, 2006, p. 201–19).

The third design principle was that the design and development of the training resource should involve stakeholders from across the University, drawing upon academic and professional expertise as appropriate. In her account of developing an E-learning module for personal tutors, Fisher identified engagement and management of stakeholders as key to the successful development of the resource (Fisher, 2017, p. 14–15). This project had many stakeholders who played different roles in the design and delivery of the learning activity, both in terms of technical support and the development of content. Key stakeholders in the design of the resource included the Dean of Students' Office, Arts Faculty Education Team, IT Services, Wellbeing Support, and Student Careers and Skills. I engaged these stakeholders through regular meetings, interviews and email correspondence during the design process. Stakeholders provided core content for the resource, including text, images, diagrams, videos, and links to further resources. At later stages of the learning resource's development, Senior Tutors, Departmental Administrators, Heads of Department, Directors of Student Experience and Student Representatives played a key role in promoting the training to staff. They also offered important feedback on the resource upon its initial release which enhanced the usefulness and approachability of the training. I gathered this feedback via email, interviews and a questionnaire embedded on the training Moodle page.

The fourth design principle was that the training should be accessible to users with different levels of digital literacy and differing accessibility requirements. Martin and Grudxiecki have defined digital literacy is defined as:

> 'Awareness, attitude and ability of individuals to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyze and synthesize digital resources, construct new knowledge, create media expressions, and communicate with others, in the context of specific life situations, in order to enable constructive social action; and to reflect upon this process' (Martin and Grudziecki, 2006, p. 255).

Accordingly, at an early stage in the design process it was decided that the training needed to be easy to use and simple in its design to ensure its optimal usefulness to staff. Connected to this, it was decided that the resource should be developed within a system that the staff were already familiar with and that was institutionally supported. In terms of accessibility, all the content was designed with reference to Accessibility Regulations relating to websites and mobile applications that were introduced in 2018. This involved ensuring that all of the materials were made printer enabled, and guaranteed to be visible on computer screens, phones and tablets. Text included in the resource was also written in plain, jargon free language, in line with recent advice on promoting virtual inclusivity by JISC and the UK government (Inclusive Teaching Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence, 2017; Accessible Virtual Learning Environments, 2018; JISC, 2018).

The fifth design principle was that the resource should be clearly structured and navigable. This included ensuring that it was possible for learners to complete the training in one session, or dip in-and-out of relevant sections as required. Partly this was to support user's learning as they engaged with the online resource. Oliver notes that "scaffolding"—where teachers provide assistance and support through the structuring and clear communication of instructions and peer examples—is vital for the success of online learning activities (Hannafin et al., 1999, p. 250–51). This design principle was also identified as best practice in terms of promoting inclusion and accessibility (Inclusive Teaching Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence, 2017; Accessible Virtual Learning Environments, 2018; JISC, 2018). At the same time, this design principle was put in place to guarantee that personal tutors could easily engage with the resource to find the information they needed while students were present or in emergency situations.

The sixth design principle was that the training resource should be developed within a flexible learning environment to support the resource's learning aims and enable adherence to the other design principles. Oliver suggests that "Flexible and online learning environments need learning supports to be designed as integral parts of the learning process" (Hannafin et al., 1999, p. 249). In this case, it was decided to design and deliver the resource within the University of Warwick's supported Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). This decision was made for several other reasons. Firstly, as the University's Virtual Learning Environment staff, learners would already be familiar with Moodle and not require extra training to engage with it. Secondly, as the University's VLE, Moodle is well-resourced and supported by colleagues in IT who can ensure that the system is working, secure and up-to-date. Thirdly, the knowledge expertise and support of colleagues in IT was considered essential for maximizing quality in learning design, and for providing support learners engaging with the training after it was launched. Fourthly, Moodle allows for the development of interactive content and the integration of text, images, and videos into learning resources. It also facilitates the use and integration of other free, open learning tools, such as H5P. Fifthly, through Moodle it is possible to embed a feedback form into the resource page and track the numbers of people accessing different parts of the training. This was considered key in enabling the project's evaluation. Finally, Moodle automatically enrolls all members of staff from the central HR system. In turn, using a Faculty web group, it was easy for me to enroll colleagues and stakeholders to training resource Moodle page. As the module leader, I could also easily manage module enrolments.

DESIGN PROCESS

In July 2018, I asked IT services to set up permanent space for developing the training in Moodle. Around this time, I also storyboarded the structure of the training module (detailed below). Subsequently, I began to populate the Moodle space with content which took about 80 h of work in total to complete. The main Moodle page provides an overview of the training, including a summary of content, links to the parts of the training developed within the H5P presentation tool, and information about how to access the links. Here it is explained that the training should take between 45 and 90 min to complete. The top of the page includes a link to the feedback form and some images to make it more visually appealing to users. The main Moodle page also provides a summary of the main learning objectives for the training resource. These aims were developed out of the aims for the training design, discussed above, which were identified through interviews with key personal tutor stakeholders. The main learning objectives for the training were as follows:

- To understand the expectations, boundaries and requirements of the personal tutor and the personal tutor-tutee relationship;
- To understand the administrative responsibly inferred on personal tutors and the principles of common regulatory policies;
- To understand when and how to signpost students looking for specialist support;
- To understand how personal tutors can obtain personal tutoring help, guidance and support.

Early in the design process I decided to divide the training into 4 sections to make it easily navigable and possible to complete in sections. I also decided to divide the training into sections so new training sections could be added, as and when needed, at a later date. The 4 core sections of the training and the content they cover are:

1. Introduction to Personal Tutoring at Warwick
   a. Role of Personal Tutor
   b. Expectations of Personal Tutors
   c. Expectations of Personal Tutees
   d. Role of Senior Tutor
   e. Boundaries
   f. Institutional Arrangements
   g. Confidentiality
   h. Storing Student Information
   i. Support and Resources
2. Personal Tutor Meetings
   a. Organizing Meetings
   b. The First Meeting
   c. Personal Tutor Agreement
   d. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
   e. Recording Meetings
   f. Personal Progress and Development Forms
   g. Listening to Students
   h. Common Issues
3. Administration
   a. Attendance
   b. Mitigating Circumstances
   c. Reasonable Adjustments
   d. Writing References
   e. Appeals
   f. Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures
4. Signposting to Pastoral Support and University Services
   a. Signposting and Referral
   b. Wellbeing Support
   c. Skills and Personal Development
   d. Student Opportunities (Careers)
   e. Careers Advisors
   f. Students' Union
   g. Other Support Services

These 4 sections were selected to mirror the expectations of the role as agreed by the University of Warwick Senate and Council in 2018, and the learning objectives of the training. The content of each section was identified from existing materials provided in detailed form on the Dean of Students' website, Student Opportunities website, and Wellbeing Support website. These materials had been developed over several years in response to enquiries from staff to the Dean of Students' Office and professional services. The resource attempted to repackage this often quite dense material into bite-size and engaging pieces of information, providing links to the more detailed information on relevant cases that tutors might need in particular instances.

The core sections of the training described were developed in the free, open source learning design tool H5P. H5P, specifically the course presentation tool, was selected to create the learning objects within the training page for several reasons. Firstly, this tool enables you to develop slides with text, multimedia and different sorts of learner-based interactions, including multiple choice questions, true or false questions, interactive videos, interactive summaries, and drag and drop questions. Secondly, H5P enables the user to track their progression through the learning through a progress bar. Users can also access particular sections of the training using the navigation bar, and exit and re-join the H5P content at the same place. Thirdly, materials hosted in the H5P presentation tool can be downloaded and printed. Fourthly, by using the H5P tool for the training it was hoped that staff would becoming more familiar with the learning tool and interested in using it within their own teaching.

Each section of the training begins with a slide which outlines what issues/topics that part of the training will cover. The issues covered in the training and slide content were identified and developed from personal tutor resources provided by the Dean of Students Office, Teaching Quality, and information given by central service departments including Wellbeing Support and Student opportunity. The decision to draw upon existing materials was deliberate to avoid confusion of messages, and to also enable signposting to toolkits and other materials to support the Moodle training. Efforts were made to make the text clear to read and engaging in tone. The text on the slides was also kept to a minimum with a focus on clear messages. Links to more detailed information about different issues and topics was provided on almost every slide of the presentation(s). The slides also featured a range of different images, including some of students which were provided by marketing and that complied with GDPR. Other images and symbols relating to teaching and learning that featured in the training were identified using the Creative Commons website. Where specific documents were being discussed, especially in section 2 on Personal Tutor Meetings, I included screen images of the documents to make them recognizable to staff. Section 4 on signposting to pastoral support and university support services also featured images and diagrams which were developed by student opportunity and wellbeing support. This section also includes direct contact information for central support services. No single presentation was longer than 20 slides to not overload the learners. As the learner moves through the training, they can see how far they have progressed via a track bar which runs along the bottom of the slides. There is also a navigation bar which can be used to jump slides, and at the end of each section there is an interactive summary of the learner's quiz responses is produced so they can see their progression.

Interactive learning activities were peppered throughout the presentation slides, with one appearing about every 6 slides. These were designed to help learners condense their learning, reflect on what they had learnt, and to maintain engagement. These assessments also allowed tutors to identify holes of understanding and encouraged further focus on prior areas of the training that may have been not fully understood. Examples from the resource include a multiple-choice question where users are asked to identify the correct personal tutor role descriptor and expectations of a personal tutor, and true or false questions about the number of expected personal tutor meetings. Again, in section 4 there is a set of drag and drop question sets which ask tutors "what they would do" when encountering various student reported personal or academic issues. As with these examples, the assessment activities focused on questions that were "core" to personal tutoring practice, or where there were known to be common misconceptions among tutors as identified through discussions with the Dean of Students' Office and interviews with academic staff. After completing each of these questions sets, users are shown which questions they answered correctly or incorrectly, and given further information about why answers are correct or incorrect.

The project was soft launched to key stakeholders in late August 2018. These stakeholders were encouraged to give feedback via a questionnaire hosted on the main Moodle page, email (my email address was listed on the site page and sent alongside the email invite) and individually scheduled interviews. Overall the response was positive and welcoming of the resource's development. There was particular praise for the interactive activities which stakeholders reported were engaging and helpful in the retention of knowledge. However, early user testing revealed some flaws with the interactive activities which were found to be overly complicated or broken in some cases. Subsequently, these were fixed or made simpler. This feedback also revealed some confusion about how to access the H5P content. To remedy this, I created clearer signposting about how to access the different parts of the training on the main page. Most of the negative feedback related to the content and tone of the training which some felt was too didactic, patronizing or "dry." In response, I went through the training and tried to make the tone of the text warmer and more approachable to create a more positive learning environment for users.

With the revisions made, the training was formally launched to the Faculty of Arts in September 2018, 4 weeks in advance of the 2018/19 academic year. This was timed to give staff returning from summer leave time to complete it. The training was promoted to staff through Heads of Department, Directors of Student Experience, the Arts Faculty Education Committee and Departmental Administrators in departmental meetings and through email communications. I also sent out regular weekly emails advertising the resource to all Arts Faculty staff using the group mass mail resource. This lengthy launch process ensured that all staff who needed to had access to the resource and safeguarded against issues relating to incomplete staffing and mailing lists which can often be an issue with changes in staffing at the start of the new academic year. It is important to note that the training was designed as a support resource rather than a mandatory training, and participation was completely voluntary.

EVALUATION

The evaluation of the project began early in the stages of its development and is ongoing. The project's evaluation plan was developed from Butcher, Davies and Highton's model of learning design evaluation. This plan was selected because it encourages the project designer to identify their own measures of success and value judgement. It also uses four key steps of ongoing evaluation: measurement, value judgement, action, and monitoring (Butcher et al., 2006, p. 189). This method of ongoing evaluation was considered useful for this project because the training was designed to be flexible to enable it to evolve over time. The project's evaluation aims sought to establish:

- Levels of engagement (including ongoing engagement) with the training resource;
- The pedagogical effectiveness of the Moodle training as a learning resource;
- The impact of personal tutor Moodle on staff experiences of delivering personal tutoring;
- The impact of personal tutor Moodle on student experiences of personal tutoring.

Measurements of the learning resource's success were gathered through analysis of learner analytics (using standard Moodle reports that detail user engagement both across the Moodle resource as a whole, and in relation to specific H5P learning objects) interviews with key stakeholders, stakeholder feedback, a self-completed questionnaire on the resource page, and analysis of data relating to student support from the NSS. Measures of success, or value judgements, were identified as: more than 80 members of staff accessing the learning resource; good numbers of returning users; positive responses from stakeholders and learners on the design and content of the learning resource; and improvement in student responses to personal tutoring and student support questions in the NSS.

Evaluation of the project began with interviews with key stakeholders. This allowed for actions to be taken to enhance or improve parts of the training as it was developed. After the soft-launch of the project, key stakeholders were invited to give detailed feedback on the resource through questionnaires and interviews. This was important to the enhancement of the resource before its full launch. Heads of Department and the Arts Faculty Education Committee were also invited to provide feedback on the resource after its full release. Regular monitoring was facilitated through keeping the feedback questionnaire on the learning resource page open throughout the year, through continuing analysis of user analytics, and regular check-ins with key stakeholders like the Dean of Students' Office.

To make it easy for people to access and promote awareness of the training, users were automatically enrolled on the module via an Arts Faculty staff webgroup. In 2018, there were ∼250 academic staff eligible to act as personal tutors in the Arts Faculty (although a portion of this figure would have been exempt due to research leave, personal leave, individual circumstances, or because they had a senior administrative role). As of April 2019, the training had been viewed by at least 143 users. This is seen as evidence of success, especially given that the training was optional, many staff had undertaken face-to-face personal tutor training delivered by the Dean of Students' Office in the same period, and that 80 staff completing the training had been identified as a measure of success in the evaluation strategy.

Users were not required to undertake all of the learning sections and instead were free to access the parts they might find useful. Data analytics which demonstrate staff engagement with the different sections are therefore revealing of what areas and issues personal tutors want the most support with. Part 1 (Introduction to Personal Tutoring) and part 2 (Personal Tutor Meetings) have proved the most popular parts of the training. Since September 2018, part 1 of the training has been viewed 341 by 143 users, and part 2 has been viewed 289 times by 121 users. That said, usage of the final two sections of the training has also been relatively good. Part 3 (Administration) has been accessed 206 times by 107 users, and part 4 (Signposting) has been accessed 230 times by 109 users. This data suggests that most staff were interested in using the resource to find out about the role of personal tutor (encompassing expectations, boundaries and institutional arrangements), followed by personal tutor meetings. It is probable that personal tutor meetings received significant attention from staff in the Faculty of Arts due to the introduction of new administrative practices across the Arts departments in the 2018 academic year but also early lack of clarity around best practice in personal tutor meetings. The high number of returning users in all sections (sometimes more than a 1:2 ratio) has been viewed as positive evidence that staff who have engaged with the training have found it useful, and that the resource has been successful in its design as an ongoing, dip-in-and-out, support resource.

Users could provide feedback on the resource via a questionnaire on the Moodle page. This optional feedback questionnaire was kept short (4 questions) to encourage responses. These questions were:

- How useful did you find this Arts Faculty Personal Tutor Training Module? (Extremely Useful; Very Useful; Useful; Not Very Useful; No Use at all)
- How likely are you to refer back to this training? (Extremely likely; Very likely; Likely; Possibly; Unlikely)
- What did you like about the training? (open comment box)
- How could the training be improved? (open comment box)

Unfortunately, responses were quite low (9 in total by April 2018). Responses were generally very positive. A total of 44% of respondents said they found the resource extremely useful, with most other respondents recording that they found it very useful or useful. A total of 66% respondents reported they were likely to recommend the resource to a friend. Positive comments included: "very clear, accessible and practical"; "All the information is in one place"; "Detailed information and guidance. Excellent clarifications on how to advise students suffering from stress/anxiety and requesting potential mitigation"; "good prediction of possible misconceptions"; "Clear and complete. A lot of useful information. Links to relevant documents and webpages"; "Minimal time needed for the knowledge gain facilitated"; "simple and easy to navigate"; "Easy to understand and follow. All topics covered. Loads of useful and printable documents." In response to the question of "how the training could be improved" most answers focused on the content of the training, with respondents highlighting spelling errors, broken links, and issues with terminology. Issues with spelling and links were rectified as identified as and when I received feedback.

Feedback on the resource from personal tutors and senior management has been highly positive. The resource has received praise from the Arts Faculty Education Committee and Heads of Departments, as well as Senior Tutors and Personal Tutors. At the Arts Faculty Education Committee and Heads of Department Forum, several academics reported that they found the online training more useful than the face-to-face training offered by the Dean of Students Office because it provided more practical information, and because they could work through it at their own leisure and return to it when needed. The resource has also attracted interest from around the University, with several departments getting in touch to consult on how to develop similar resources for their departments (Warwick Manufacturing Group and Sociology). The Dean of Students' Office have also decided to use this resource as the model for their Personal Tutor Basic Training as an online training resource. This training resource is due to be launched in the 2020/21 academic year.

In the year after the introduction of the training resource there was also a substantive improvement in student satisfaction concerning "academic support." This demonstrated in shifts in the Arts Faculty's NSS scores. In 2018, the Faculty's departments averaged a 73.2% average student satisfaction score for "academic support." In 2019, the Faculty average for "academic support" in the NSS rose to 82%. This constituted 8.8% improvement in the Faculty's average for academic support scores, with the introduction of the personal tutor training resource representing the consistent change or enhancement in personal tutoring across all of the Faculty's departments. In some of the Faculty's departments, especially those that were particularly proactive in promoting the training, there was an even larger improvement significant swing, with Theatre and Performance Studies improving their academic support score 30.5% and Classics 11.3%. There is thus a correlation between the introduction of the training and improved NSS support scores around academic support.

Feedback from an interview with the Arts Faculty Student Union Representative also suggests that students welcome the development of the training as a way of enhancing personal tutor training provision. Indeed, after reviewing the training resource the Arts Faculty Student Union Representative reported their support for staff being required to undertake the training at the Arts Faculty Education Committee. The student representative also requested the development of a similar sort of online resource for personal tutees to help them get the most out of personal tutoring. Future developments will focus on developing content for supporting specific groups of students (BAME, widening participation students and international students) through personal tutoring.

CONCLUSION: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER PRACTICE

This case study has shown the value in developing interactive digital resources to support personal tutoring. It illustrates that both staff and students welcome the delivery of personal tutor training and resources online, and that in many cases online provision is seen as preferable to face-to-face training because it can be accessed when personal tutors require and can provide a single hub of information relating to personal tutoring.

The case study illustrates that staff engagement with institutional training is likely to be more successful if delivered through digital systems which staff are already familiar with and easy to access. Moreover, it evidences that staff appreciate interactive training that includes a range of engaging mixed media and that is designed as a learning activity, rather than a didactic informational resource. In terms of content, it seems that staff prefer to be provided with a limited amount of text which communicates key messages in a clear, engaging and warm tone, with further detail being provided in links to resources. The integration of navigational aids and the division of the training into sections also seems to have been essential to the success of the resource because of the way it easily allows staff to access to the specific information as and when they require. Additionally, in interviews staff have signaled that they welcome the option of training materials being downloadable and printable. Furthermore, this case study has shown that engagement with existing pedagogic literature on personal tutoring and technology enhanced learning, and a deep understanding and consideration of the institutional context is essential to the successful design of personal tutor online training. Engagement with key stakeholders and developing content out of materials provided by trusted sources of authority (in this case, the Dean of Students Office, Wellbeing Support, and Teaching Quality) has also been illustrated to be key in developing authentic and useful personal tutor guidance, and in promoting staff engagement with optional training.

More broadly, feedback on the resource from staff and students reveals that university communities increasingly expect enhanced forms of online training and digital teaching and learning support. At the same time, in its demonstration of the interest that senior university management at the University of Warwick have shown in developing similar online training resources for staff, this case study illustrates a trend where digital solutions are increasingly being looked to by institutions to achieve strategic goals and implement institutional changes in practice and process. Yet, this case study reveals the key importance of having staff who teach, and who have expertise in educational design, in developing educational training materials and taking the lead on such projects to ensure that training always has a primary focus on learning and the needs of learners. Although this case study has focused on the context at the University of Warwick, it includes insights and perspectives that can be used to support the design of similar learning resources in other Higher Education Institutions and internationally.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation, to any qualified researcher.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

POLICY AND PRACTICE REVIEWS
published: 28 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00131

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What Works 2? Graduates as Advisors for Transition and Students' Success

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Will there ever be a University that provides sufficient staffing resource to provide the perfect academic advising and tutoring service to all students? There may also be the small matter of a debate as to what that perfect service may offer. This article will discuss one University's approach that sought to makes effective use of staffing resource, offers significant development opportunities for those staff and ensure relevance and connectivity between students and their staff. The model that was designed, and is now embedded, focused on the creation of an integrated system of Student Success Advisers (SSA). These roles were filled by students who had just completed their degree in the faculty in which they are then employed. This new staffing resource targets a specific aspect of support and advising for students that focuses upon student transition and the first year experience. The SSAs are viewed by students as relevant and relatable providing an approachable interface between students and staff, and evidence suggests that it works. The roles were created through the University's participation in the Higher Education Academy's What Works Student Retention and Success program (2012–2016) and now sees 17 SSAs employed across the University. This article will consider the creation of the role and its fit to the university; offer clarity around role objectives and provide insights from GSSAs on impact of the role. It will then detail how the role grew and became embedded across the university, explaining the integration with the university's wider student support system to engage students through their transition and first year experience.

Keywords: retention, students, co-design, advising, community

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
Liz Thomas,
Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Reviewed by:
Marjorie Wilson,
Teesside University, United Kingdom
Ben Robinson,
City, University of London, United Kingdom

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *10 January 2020*
Accepted: *30 June 2020*
Published: *28 July 2020*

Citation:
Millard L and Janjua R (2020) What Works 2? Graduates as Advisors for Transition and Students' Success. Front. Educ. 5:131. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00131

INTRODUCTION

For the past 6 years Birmingham City University (BCU) has been developing, evaluating and expanding the roles of recent graduates in supporting and advising new students through the transition into and through the University. The role was created through the *What Works?2,* Paul Hamlyn Foundation, national initiative which provided the opportunity for the University to explore student retention and success through a funded and focused approach. This saw the University build on its rich student engagement foundations and experience of employing student on campus to integrate this within a new focus on the first year experience and students in transition.

This article will draw together literature, consider the design process that led to the creation of a new Student Success Advisor (SSA) role, offer clarity around role objectives, and provide insights from SSAs on impact of the role. The authors also reveal the institutional impact, how the role grew, and became embedded across the university, and explain the integration with the university's wider student support system as it complemented and added to the institutional personal tutoring and academic advising resource.

A STARTING POINT THROUGH WHAT WORKS?2

In 2013 the University applied to become part of the What Works?2 national initiative. This was funded through the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and co-ordinated by the UK' Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Action on Access. It incorporated 13 institutions and 43 discipline areas and was informed by previous work undertaken between 2008 and 2012 that saw seven projects and 22 higher education providers identify, evaluate and disseminate effective practice to improve student retention. This was the *What Works? Student retention and success program (*Thomas, 2012*), or What Works?1.*

The principle behind the second iteration of What Works was to build on the findings of What Works?1 and examine how higher education providers could develop those models and improve student retention and success. In particular, this spoke of a need to recognize that "*It is the human side of higher education that comes first – finding friends, feeling confident and above all, feeling a part of your course of study and the institution*" (Thomas and Jones, 2017). The institutional program required the creation of a cross-institutional team and the identification of three discipline areas in which to deliver interventions. Interventions had to fall into at least one of the three categories (active learning, co-curricular, and induction) and "*had to aim to improve engagement and belonging through: facilitating supportive peer relations; enabling meaningful interaction between staff and students; developing students' capacity, confidence, and identity to be successful higher education learners" (*Thomas and Jones, 2017*).* These had been identified as areas of significant impact during What Works?1 project.

This direction resonated strongly with BCU which was one of the pioneers of a new type of student engagement approach in the United Kingdom. Since 2008, the University had been employing students to act as academic partners and work alongside faculty and professional services staff to identify curriculum and university community issues and co-develop solutions (Nygaard et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2014; Curran and Millard, 2015). This had seen external recognition through the Times Higher Education award for outstanding support for students in 2010 and was firmly embedded within the University's mission. This approach, whereby students were seen as partners and were employed to assist in improving the quality of their learning experience through collaborative redesign and creation projects aligned well with the potential area of investigation offered by What Works?2. The Paul Hamlyn initiative offered a new focus for this approach and enabled the University to consider transition into and students' success through the first year experience.

Birmingham City University educates 24,500 students and is located in the center of England within a major conurbation of over a million people. It mainly recruits regionally with over two thirds of students being from the region. It has a richly diverse and ethnically mixed student population with over 50% of students originating from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. BCU is an institution that is proud of its widening participation mission and with such a perspective participation in What Works?2 and the pursuit of mechanisms and ideas to enable student success became a driver for institutional change.

Change normally starts small and in this case it started with three program teams, Radiography, Media and the Built Environment, who embraced the University's student engagement philosophy and formulated a shared proposition and specific ideas for impactful change. Through this process they were directed by the University's Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) and Birmingham City Students' Union (BCUSU) as the partners recognized the need to focus on the person, not the cohort, and to seek to make connections through a variety of means from academic to social to professional.

The aims of the BCU and BCUSU initiative were to:

- Interweave academic and social elements to better support students through the transition into and through university;
- Utilize this approach to provide students with a multiplicity of avenues for support and advice;
- Ensure a smoother and more successful transition that leads to greater student and organizational success.

Through these aims the University aimed to develop principles, processes and examples at course and school level of how to improve transition and retention practices that could be embedded across the university and shared with the sector through What Works?2.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

The interventions designed by the course teams through the initiative were founded upon the What Works model (Thomas and Jones, 2017). The BCU approach reflected this and saw a focus on striving to embed all interventions within the student academic journey, or academic sphere, rather than placing it on the fringes within separate social or service related activities.

This need to focus on the academic sphere of a student's life to generate a sense of belonging and community was a belief that had been a driver at the University since 2008 when it first invested in and initiated its student engagement approach to improving the student experience. This was reflected in Trowler (2010): (3) definition which considered the dual investment of institutions and students as:

> *"Student engagement is concerned with the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimize the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution."*

For the University, the investment by both students and the institution was key as it focused upon a partnership approach to improvement and quality enhancement (Brand and Millard, 2018). Coates (2005): (26) spoke of learning as a joint endeavor *"which also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved."* Both Coates (2005) and Trowler (2010) suggest the need for an institutional commitment to make change happen and participation in What Works?2 provided that institutional spur to action and validated the developments that were made for those course teams involved.

The University and its students wrote of this approach (Nygaard et al., 2013) and saw student engagement and partnership as an institutional "state of mind" that infects all aspects of academic and non-academic provision. This approach is echoed within the Higher Education Academy's (2014) Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership which highlights an institutional approach to working with students as partners. This requires institutions to embed this partnership approach within the processes and procedures of the institution in order to embed the culture of partnership.

Barr and Tagg (1995): (565) added the perspective that the university needs to move from the instruction paradigm that "*a college is an institution that exists to provide instruction*" to one that adopts a learning paradigm where the "*college is an institution that exists to produce learning*" and this is echoed in the student partnership approach adopted by the teams at BCU. Academic staff were often learning as much from engaging in the process with their student partners as the students (Nygaard et al., 2013: 114). Reasons for why things were done in certain ways were questioned by students who suggested more relevant alternatives that would better engage a new student of today and courses became more current and relevant. Huba and Freed (2000) suggested the need to move from a teacher centered learning environment to one that is learner centered. This sees a culture where the approach is co-operative, supportive and collaborative where the academics' role is to coach and facilitate learning together with students. This could translate as a personalized approach to learning and the need to treat students as individuals.

This could see the need for institutions and academic course teams to create the scaffolding for fostering peer to peer relationships that enable supporting structures to be created. Krause (2012): (459) reminds us that "*for some students, engagement with university studies is a battle and a challenge rather than a positive, fulfilling experience*" and that it may require some students to come "*to terms with new ways of learning and interacting that may prove uncomfortable.*" One way in which this can be supported is through the ability of a student to generate relationships with peers and staff that may significantly improve their confidence. Holdsworth et al. (2017): (11) explained that "*encouraging the development of friendship networks assists in the development of resilience*' and this can be enabled through effective design that enables student interaction and collaboration."

Therefore, the development of new relationships between peers and staff was seen as key as the What Works?2 interventions were developed. The University saw the potential for such support and trust development and for a greater sense of community being generated that could enhance persistence at University. This broader, integrated approach is reflected in Lochtie et al. (2018): (11) who called for the "*need for a more holistic approach to student support*" that is able to engage and develop with the diversity of students who enter universities with a widening participation mission. Lochtie et al. (2018): (11) see that approach embracing "*student engagement, transition, advice, and student learning development,*" all elements that helped shape the developments at BCU.

Johnson et al. (2015): (880) identified that students wanted to engage with "*influential people who were perceived more as models of resilience.*" These models of resilience may be available in many institutions in many different places, but they offered the distinction between those who talked about behaviors and character that enable resilience (messengers) and those who enacted it, such as the Student Success Advisers who are discussed later in this chapter.

However, a problem with a focus on resilience (Walker et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2015; Holdsworth et al., 2017) is that it tends to suggest it is the student's fault for not being able to cope with the impact of coming to university. This view was not encouraged by the What Works?2 process at the University and saw the leaders of the work explore institutional changes and other models to support student development. In particular, the first year experience literature provided a rich source of guidance. The work emanating from Australia, Lizzio (2006), around the five senses model enshrined what the course teams were seeking to create at the University.

Course teams sought to recognize and map the four senses of capability, purpose, resourcefulness, and connectedness within their curriculum and through that embed the culture and values to support the work over a longer period. Certainly from an institutional perspective this was the effect as a new academic staff development offer was made around the first year experience with a new highly popular module created in the MEd Learning and Teaching in HE (Millard et al., 2016). The further opportunity to host the European First Year Experience conference in 2017 was also taken as the symbolism and recognition of the importance of student transition and the first year experience was one that institutional leaders sought to grasp to raise the profile of this area of work.

The work around the first year experience was founded upon the student engagement ethos that had driven much of the work up to that point and engaging the unengaged student remained a key challenge. Hu and Kuh (2002) sought to identify measures that could tell institutions when a student becomes disengaged. They discovered that peers substantially influenced how students spent their time "*and the meaning they made of their experiences including their personal satisfaction with college.*" They explained that satisfaction with the institution and persistence in studying on a course appeared to be directly linked to the expectation set by the institution prior to acceptance and a belief that this should be regularly communicated to students during their time at the institution. Read et al. (2003): (263) explained the way in which prospective students selected institutions was based upon their need to belong. They point to their previous research that "*discusses the ways in which some 'non-traditional' students actively choose to apply to such institutions, in order to increase their chances of 'belonging.'*" Read et al. (2003) also pointed to the fact that students chose institutions that contained similar types of students, students "like them." However, the Australian Survey of Student Engagement (ACER, 2009:43) revealed that 33% of the students surveyed considered an early departure from their institution. This, as the report admits, is an underestimate as it will clearly not include those students who have already left the institution and did not complete the survey. Therefore, the notion of belonging and institutional identification and early additional support mechanisms are vital for those students reconsidering their decision to attend university.

Through What Works? 1, Thomas (2012) suggested belonging was a students feeling of connectedness to their institution and highlighted the work of Goodenow (1993) which described belonging in an educational environment as "*Students' sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (teachers and peers) in the academic classroom setting.*" Thomas (2012) saw belonging and engagement as being implicitly interwoven and argued that for engagement to be most effective it had to be embedded within the academic sphere of student work. This echoed the perspective of Troxel (2010): (35) who in her synthesis of retention literature recommended that *student engagement and active learning should be at the heart of learning and teaching*. McMillan and Chavis (1986): (4) were one of the first authors to discuss issues around belonging and they saw five components:

> *"The first element is membership. Membership is the feeling of belonging or sharing a sense of personal relatedness. The second elements is influence, a sense of mattering, of making a difference to the group and of the group mattering to its members."*

The three other components include influence, reinforcement and shared emotional connections. The "sense of mattering" became one of the key phrases within the University and the course teams' developments to What Works?2 at BCU. A partnership approach to intervention design shows those students who participated that they mattered and that their voice had been embraced. However, the transference of that into the lived experience of students in subsequent years was the key challenge for the course teams and institution. The personal investment of time, effort and emotion by students was identified by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as being important as they sought shared emotional connections and the generation of that sense of membership.

Holdsworth et al. (2017): (2) suggested that *"Universities can nurture resilience in their learning community both formally and informally"* through facilitating learning experiences that *"support the development of skills and capabilities attributed to resilient individuals."* However, this does not mean that students should not be challenged and stretched. Felten et al. (2016) remarked that:

> *"Experienced advisers and mentors know how to scaffold experiences for students so that they encounter increasing levels of challenge, are encouraged to take greater intellectual risks, and emerge from the process with both higher levels of independence and a firm sense of being part of an academic community."*

Creating the academic community remains a focus as Goodenow (1993) and Thomas (2012) explain that the reason why a student is at university is to study an academic program and therefore that has to be identified as the primary purpose. Therefore, anything outside of the program of study may be considered to be an add-on by students and therefore of less importance. This was reflected through the BCU What Works2? teams as students told one team that if the academics did not value an activity enough to warrant placing it in the curriculum and the timetable, then why should students value it? Therefore, the development of an integrated academic approach is vital whereby the classroom contact time and the personal support is interwoven and clearly communicated to the students. The role of personal tutors and academic advising services is key in this regard. A personalized approach to student development and support has to be maintained as we enable our students to achieve to their full potential whilst recognizing and supporting their individual differences.

Walker et al. (2006): (254) concluded that there was a need to "*examine the role of resilience by exploring the life experiences and personality traits that interact and build resistance to strong social and cultural pressures that influence people to take the decisions they do.*" This personalized approach that engages with an individual's ability to be resilient is one that institutional structures and approaches need to address. This requires those approaches to view the student through an intersectional lens that enables students to enhance their own resilience and guides universities in how to create more developmental and supportive approaches. The creation of the Student Success Advisor role, detailed later, enabled such a more personalized approach and ensured each student was contacted, engaged and progress monitored as a school based support framework was constructed.

DESIGNING THE INTERVENTIONS

From the beginning of the initiative at BCU the philosophy was focused upon student as partners in design (Nygaard et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2014). This approach was welcomed and readily adopted by the discipline leads through the simple observation that they were significantly distant through role and age from having any real understanding of the attitudes and motivation of first year students. The question was posed one course leader as to why would a university design an initiative in isolation when it had such a knowledgeable resource, its own students, to draw upon?

During the planning phase of the What Works? 2 initiative, the discipline teams delayed identifying and designing interventions until the discipline leads had attended three guiding workshops run by the HEA. Those workshops on active learning, induction and co-curricular activities exposed teams to new ideas and offered evidence of impact elsewhere. These ideas were brought to three half day workshops delivered by CELT and the Students' Union. The partnership with the Students' Union was seen as key as the project sought to integrate pastoral and social activities within the academic sphere in an attempt to seek opportunities for developing the sense of belonging (Thomas, 2012).

For the three half day events, held in the Students' Union, the institutional lead stated that there was a requirement that each project team bring staff and students (at least in equal numbers) to work up and share their ideas. As the workshops progressed and project teams became accustomed to this approach one event saw the radiography team bring 20 students and five academic staff as they fully embraced the vision for change. The collaborative approach to design was a standard throughout the What Works process at BCU and continued when additional programs, having heard of the approach and success, sought entry to the change program at a later date.

THE INTERVENTION: ENABLING PEERS TO LEAD

What works?2 provided the opportunity for course teams to completely re-engineer the transition and support they provided for year one of the student experience. The most impressive of these activities saw the creation of an online pre-transition program for new students before they arrived. This was supported and moderated by senior students (peer mentors), who then liaised with those new students upon arrival having already becoming virtually acquainted. Roberts and Styron (2010) in describing social connectedness and the impact this can have on retention stated that students are "*more likely to accomplish difficult tasks when he/she is in the company of others who are like minded and facing similar challenges.*" The idea of creating an integrated student led supportive framework was seen as key as the security this offered could enable students to persist with their studies. Lochtie et al. (2018): (61) commented that students said they were best supported by their peers and Roberts and Styron (2010) suggested that the most important interactions with peers reinforced academic learning and if this took place it would permeate all the other areas of a student's university life. This mirrored the drive of What Works?2 around the value of student connections taking place within the academic sphere of student work.

The concept of peer support networks within universities is not a new concept, but what the University's School of Media did in addition was innovative and has been spread widely since its inception, within and outside of the University. The School identified that the demands of a growing student cohort and the need to co-ordinate and lead the peer mentor activities required the creation of a new role of Student Success Advisor (SSA). This role offered a bridge between student, peer mentors and staff of the university, in particular personal tutors. One key focus for this work was to track and monitor student attendance, a role that had been performed previously by personal tutors. Students value the academic and pastoral advice they gain from their tutors and the SSA role could enable more of that by removing the time spent engaging with routine administration. In addition, the SSAs provide a conduit for raising student concerns, can make early interventions to support students when they are able, but also flag those students who need assistance beyond the SSA's ability.

The SSA role continues to this day and is delivered through a recent graduate who normally stays in role for up to 2 years. Through this time limited approach they are able to maintain currency and credibility with the student cohort, but also advise course teams on the issues faced by current students. The role aims to enhance student progression and retention through collaborating with staff and students in the delivery of five key services: pre-induction, induction, extended induction, attendance monitoring and personal tutoring. It performs the vital role of tracking student progress and intervening when appropriate, for as Lochtie et al. (2018): (75) indicated research clearly shows that the "*close, regular, ongoing and systematic tracking and moderating of student progress and performance is widely considered as a necessity in any successful student intervention or support system.*"

The SSAs lead on the student transition process, co-ordinating student peer mentors and tracking engagements with students. This requires the development of a pre-induction, induction and post-induction plan to ensure each student is supported throughout their first year. However, this is not an isolated role as one SSA explained:

> *"All SSAs work together to ensure students are supported during their first week across the campus as well as co-ordinating their own student mentor teams, creating a dynamic partnership to ensure all students feel welcomed. Student mentors then develop a continuing role able to support students throughout their course academically as they are course specific and are trained to ensure the correct support (academic or pastoral) is given or signposted."*

This co-ordinated approach is important in terms of messaging and approaches taken to engaging with new students. In particular, the need to set student expectations and prepare them for study at university is key. Felten et al. (2016): (76) identified that "*students' expectations of college are shaped either serendipitously or more purposefully long before students arrive on our campuses.*" Through pre-transition work led by SSAs these expectations can start to be set and managed.

However, as Felten et al. (2016) posited a key challenge arising out of this continuing role is the definition of boundaries and the setting of expectations with students. The nature of the SSA role means that such definition is even more crucial when they are exposed on a regular basis to a myriad of academic and pastoral issues.

Student Success Advisors offer a designated, full-time targeted role and therefore have the time built in to receive training from all relevant professional services and are instructed about when to sign post to more expert advice. The provision of time to be trained is a luxury that many academic staff engaged in a personal tutor role may not enjoy (Lochtie et al., 2018: 54). However, the SSA role does not come without its challenges. As one SSA pointed out:

> *"I feel we have an instrumental role in supporting students in the University, but transitioning from being a student to a member of staff can be quite a challenge. An SSA is normally employed in the School they graduated from so the staff and student relationship*

starts to transform into a collegial one and that is easier for some academic staff and SSAs to adapt to than others."

In part, the acceptance of the SSA and their role by academic and professional staff mirrors the acceptance process being encountered by new students entering the University.

One of the key things that has surfaced during the University's student engagement work was the realization that for some students their studies were just a component of their lives and not necessarily the most important one. This may see an individual student focus on caring responsibilities or employment both of which would see many more hours spent in their local communities rather than on the campus. Perna (2010) saw employment and working alongside their studies as being the norm for students. Her belief was that this presented a significant challenge to those institutions that that did not recognize this shift as they were "*failing to recognize that higher education is generally not the primary life environment of working students" (2010,i)*.

This complexity and intersectionality of related issues that make up a student life has been recognized by the SSAs who reported:

"Students live complex lives, through regularly meeting and conversing with students we can create a picture of their day to day affairs. Students are balancing their personal life, work and studies all at the same time. Some being carers for people dependant on them at home including financially, they have financial issues, mental health and health concerns or may be feeling homesick resulting in them not attending university or having enough time for them to commit to their studies.

There have been occasions of supporting students who have said they have to go on the school run to collect and drop of siblings and support their home as their parents are always working or where a student doesn't wish to complete their program but they have to as it is their parents wish to do so. Our students show high levels of resilience and this is great to see but they do require support to help them through their circumstances."

Carini et al. (2006) identified that "low ability groups" benefitted more from the sense of being within the nurturing environment of a supportive campus environment. The SSA role was designed to foster such a climate for those students in most need. The SSAs see themselves as the first port of call for students and use this opportunity to listen and sign post students to support.

"We may be the first person they are talking to so we must be willing to listen to know how to support them best; the student may want some support in understanding the way the university works or it may be more specific such as an issue around time management and we may be able to go through a study plan drawing on our own recent experiences."

The conversations that SSAs and their peer mentor have with students focus on what is possible and how those students can achieve success; instilling aspiration and confidence in a supportive environment, but also providing a readily available source of support that is accessible. Turner (2014): (593) asserts that the generation of confidence or self-belief is key as she found that "*belief in one's ability to apply skills and knowledge is of paramount importance in influencing academic achievement and outweighs knowledge and skills in this respect.*" Schlossberg (1989): (9) identified that students need to have the belief that they "*matter to someone else*" and found five components of mattering. Within *tho*se components are importance *(an impression of being cared about)*, dependence *(a sense of being needed)* and appreciation *(recognition efforts are valued by others)* all of which could be addressed through aspects of the SSA role and their co-ordinating activities. This is reinforced by Tinto (2000): (7) "*Leavers of this type express a sense of not having made any significant contacts or not feeling membership in the institution.*" The SSA role and supporting mentoring frameworks were created to make such isolation and loneliness very difficult to achieve through a purpose of active student participation and connection.

INSTITUTIONAL ADOPTION

The What Works2? initiative has had a major impact on the University. The School of Media's approach, outlined above, saw a 7% increase in retention in 1 year, which it has maintained in subsequent years. This equated to nineteen additional students and once reported to the University executive immediately saw adoption of the strategy across the remainder of the University. The SSA role was identified as a key element of this improvement and the role was immediately replicated. At present the University has 17 SSAs working across the University's four faculties. The numbers vary between faculties as they are now funded through faculty budgets and some senior managers see the opportunities afforded by the role and allocate a variety of responsibilities.

The fact that the role is now embedded within faculties and paid for by faculty budgets means that there has been a differentiation of roles to fit the local context. Within the Faculty of Business, Law and the Social Sciences (BLSS) the SSA role focused on student attendance and engagement. This sees SSAs interacting with disengaged students to ensure they are aware of the services available at the university and how they can get back on track with their studies. BLSS has a student population which is over 70% BAME and commuter based. Students explain that they have a variety of responsibilities such as, supporting their families both emotionally and financially, caring and working a part time job as they try to complete their studies, so it is imperative students are aware of where to get support.

The faculty focused the SSA role on key groups. One large course cohort, of 1180 students across 3 years, contained a significant number of non-attending students. The 142 students identified had attended for less than 20% of classes. All those students were phoned and emailed about their absence by the SSAs and told about what support they could access to continue with their course.

Out of the 142 students, 69% of the students were from a BAME background whilst the other 31% came from a white/white other background. Responses as to why students had disengaged stemmed from, bereavement, financial issues, work commitments, personal issues, motivation and mental health issues. All students were referred to the key services at the university by the SSA as well as liaising with their personal tutor for continued support throughout their studies.

From this intervention, 85% of the 142 students remained on their course with the support from their department, 9% of students opted to resume their studies at a time more convenient to them whilst the other 6% decided to leave their course as it was not right for them at the current time in their life. Contacting these students and offering them the support that they needed allowed the majority of the students to resume with their studies and achieve a level of success that may have just slipped away from them without the positive and proactive intervention of the SSAs.

Academic staff at the university highly value the SSA role. One School of Law tutor commented that:

> *"As an academic I can provide students with support on their subject knowledge but it is the role of the SSA's to help support and coach the students through the program of study during difficult times. This can be when students have low attendance or when they need to reach out to staff for help, support and motivation to get through the year. Students sometimes feel as if they can't approach academic members of staff and instead contact the SSA's for support and guidance to get through the assessment period."*

As an institution, the move to student engaged curriculum design and student focused services that engage with existing students and recent alumni has shown thatthey can make an enormous contribution to student success. It has become clear that student related roles, such as SSAs, can offer a vitally important bridge between students and staff and between academic and non-academic departments. However, it also revealed that there needed to be flexibility in how the role was designed and implemented for different disciplines. This leads to the final element that the managers of SSAs need to be explicit around setting expectations as to what the role is there to deliver and how it integrates with and supports other university functions and roles, such as personal tutors and student services.

The partnership with Students, SSAs and the Students' Union continued through other elements of What Works2? initiative. In 2014, the partners created a new approach to the University's Welcome Week activities that sought to engage academic and social elements in a bid to ensure students started to see that they were part of a university community, started to consider their purpose for being there and delivered many opportunities for the creation of connections between students and staff.

The opportunity for significant impact on the first year experience was taken by the institutional lead who developed a module for the University MEd in Learning and Teaching Practice. The module "Transition and the First Year Experience" was first delivered as week-long block delivery for academic colleagues in June 2015. The program offered theoretical underpinning, case studies and the time to create an intervention for implementation in the coming years. SSAs were involved in the delivery of the module and created relationships with academic colleagues that went beyond the module. The creation of over 50 first year academic champions was a significant output, as were the interventions that were designed and implemented. The generation of a movement for transitions and the first year experience at the University reached its culmination in 2017 when it hosted the European First Year Experience conference, a three-day conference that attracted over 250 participants from across the world.

As the authors reflect on these developments and the institutional importance in which transition and the first year experience is seen, it would appear that the university has started to develop a holistic transition pedagogy, as called for by Kift (2009), in which institutional silos are traversed to develop a well-designed, engaging and supportive transition into university life. There is still much to be done, but the institutional commitment remains to take on that challenge.

CONCLUSION

Lochtie et al. (2018): (2) suggest that personal tutoring is "*experiencing a renewed focus, even renewed vigor,*" whilst also recognizing that the "*models to articulate this delivery can differ quite substantially.*" The interventions described in this article suggest an alternative model where trained and prepared recent graduates provide a new interface that supports students, offering a new conduit through which they can access higher level support from academic or wellbeing advisers. The SSA model does not seek to replace personal tutors or advising, rather support it at a time of increasing student numbers, and offer an alternative avenue for students to decide how they might wish to access the support and development needs they require. Through this approach high quality advising retains and enhances its vital role, as SSAs are able to identify and direct those most in need of that advice.

The approach adopted by the University is centered around a need to create roles, activities and people who can operate in a boundary spanning manner. This results in the development of solutions to issues not barriers and rules that prevent student success. One of the key elements of this approach sees the creation of formal and informal learning communities (Felten et al., 2016) that make relationships central to the learning process. This reminder returns us to the reason the University became involved in What Works2? and the principle that underpins all its activity in this area of students as partners in which student perspectives and ideas are incorporated into the design and delivery of their experience at the university. This remains an ongoing belief and as Healey et al. (2014) wisely concluded:

> "*partnership is understood as a relationship in which all involved are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together to foster engaged student learning and engaging learning and teaching enhancement. Partnership is essentially a way of doing things, rather than an outcome in itself.*"

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 27 May 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00060

What's the Deal? The Making, Shaping and Negotiating of First-Year Students' Psychological Contract With Their Personal Tutor in Higher Education

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The psychological contract is widely used to study employer-employee relationships, but few studies have applied it to a higher education context. This research examines the usefulness of psychological contract theory to explore the student-personal tutor relationship from the student perspective. In-depth interviews with first-year undergraduates revealed new insights into the formation of the psychological contract and the dynamic nature of this relationship. When experiencing a conflict, discrepancy or breach to their perceived contract with their personal tutor, students undertake a complex sense-making attribution process and attempt to rebalance their psychological contract. The findings revealed the vital role the personal tutor has in the making, shaping and negotiating of the student's psychological contract which goes beyond the bounds of that specific relationship to the contract students have with the institution. The research highlights the potential uses of psychological contract theory to uncover and negotiate the "deal" students have with the university. The findings are useful for those working within the UK but offer insights that could be transferred to other international contexts in terms of understanding the psychological contracts of their students with the personal tutor and the institution.

Keywords: personal tutor, higher education, psychological contract, student expectations, personal tutoring, relationship

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
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United Kingdom

Reviewed by:
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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to
Leadership in Education,
a section of the journal
Frontiers in Education

Received: *30 January 2020*
Accepted: *29 April 2020*
Published: *27 May 2020*

Citation:
Yale A (2020) What's the Deal? The Making, Shaping and Negotiating of First-Year Students' Psychological Contract With Their Personal Tutor in Higher Education. Front. Educ. 5:60. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00060

INTRODUCTION

In a competing UK mass higher education (HE) context there is much interest in the role of the personal tutor, given its potential to impact student outcomes, experiences, and measures of institutional success positively (Lochtie et al., 2018). In particular, the relationship between student and their personal tutor has been found to positively influence student retention (Thomas et al., 2017). The UK Office for Students introduced the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (Department for Education, 2017) as a measure of excellence of universities and continues to identify retention as a core metric. The personal tutor role also has links to many other positive student outcomes in HE, particularly during the transition to university. For example, research supports that having a positive student- personal tutor relationship can engender a sense of belonging and connectedness in students (Thomas et al., 2017; Yale, 2017). Given the importance of the role, understanding more about this relationship is crucial in a changing HE context which, from its massification and increases to fees, is likely to mean a more diverse student body with more complex needs which have likely changed the nature of student expectations (Lochtie et al., 2018).

Approaches to personal tutoring vary across UK higher education institutions (HEI) from a purely academic support role to a pastoral model, providing both academic and personal support. How the role functions also varies, with some HEIs embedding the support within the curriculum and at others where the personal tutor will meet with their students outside of formal teaching, individually or in groups (Yale, 2019).

One way to explore the student- personal tutor relationship may be through applying a framework predominantly used to examine employer-employee relationships. This is referred to as the psychological contract (PC) and evidence from the small number of studies in this context suggests this may be a useful lens to examine HE relationships (Bordia et al., 2010; Koskina, 2013; O'Toole and Prince, 2015). For example, Bordia et al. (2010) used the PC effectively to study relationships between students and their research supervisors. Given the importance of the personal tutor role and the potential of the PC to offer a better understanding of the nature of this relationship and student expectations; this research will explore the student- personal tutor relationship through a PC theory lens.

APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT THEORY

Although the concept of the psychological contract has been much debated, for consistency, this research uses the definition outlined in O'Toole and Prince (2015), which draws on (Rousseau, 1989) reconceptualization, and applies it within a HE context. O'Toole and Prince(2015, p. 161) define the PC as, "... the subjective beliefs concerning rights and responsibilities that an individual holds with regard to an exchange agreement between themselves and an organization, which 'solidifies' into a mental model." The PC draws from social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and is described as compliance by both parties to the rules of exchange within the relationship, which then fosters a trusting relationship over time (Rousseau, 2001). Through a series of reciprocal exchanges, interdependency develops in reaching desired outcomes, which in turn generates perceptions of obligations and the expectation that they will receive the equivalent of their own contributions in return (Bordia et al., 2010).

Prior to Rousseau (1989) reconceptualization, social exchanges in the PC were seen as being more values based (e.g., Argyris, 1960). Rousseau refined the construct to a more subjective belief of individuals in a work context regarding mutual obligations of reciprocity which constitute the contract (Rousseau, 1989, 1995, 2001, 2011, 2012). "Obligations" are seen as different to "expectations," as expectations are general beliefs about what a job and organization will be like. As such, PC breaches involving obligations tend to be more serious than unmet expectations (Robinson, 1996).

The PC is held by the individual but can be shaped by the organization (Conway and Briner, 2005). Rousseau (2001) suggests that the PC starts to develop from actual or implied promises made by organizational agents during the recruitment and socialization process. For students, Bordia et al. (2010) suggest information is gathered from formal sources such as websites, university prospectuses and open days and also informally through word of mouth (other students, tutors, alumni, department). This information forms a mental framework of expectations and obligations and is the basis of the PC. They suggest that fulfillment of the PC obligations leads to positive outcomes such as increased motivation to learn, overall satisfaction with the educational process, and feelings of well-being (Bordia et al., 2010). The PC can also be shaped through direct experiences and the perceptions of interactions (Rousseau, 2012). The PC is then adapted throughout the duration of the relationship to take account of the extent to which each party fails or fulfills the perceived promises and obligations (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). When changes occur, the individual goes through a sense-making process to interpret the changes in terms of how they impact on the individual themselves (De Vos et al., 2003).

When students start university they will have existing understandings or "schema" relating to expectations of university. According to Rousseau (1995), this forms the basis of the PC, which will then be adapted and developed through observation and experience. In addition to the more general schema relating to university, students will also have a specific PC concerning the relationship with their PT. A schema is explained as a dynamic mental model of the subjective beliefs concerning the rights and responsibilities of an exchange agreement between themselves and an organization or agent of the organization (O'Toole and Prince, 2015). This forms the basis of the PC and this information is used when trying to find causal explanations for any perceived breach of contract and make attributions as to the causes (Weiner, 1985).

Consistent with schema theory, with any new experiences and information, whether explicit or implied, attempts will then be made to try and fit these into existing networks of knowledge. The result is that more elaborate schemas form or a new schema will be created (Rousseau, 1995, 2001). In some cases this is unsuccessful and this causes an internal conflict. Bordia et al. (2010) suggest that any such experience will add to an already stressful time for students trying to adapt to university life. It is likely that there will be many new experiences which do not fit with students' schemas, particularly as they seem to know little of what to expect of university at the start (Yale, 2017).

If an individual believes that promises in the contract are unfilled and that the other party has failed in their obligations in how they respond, this can result in a breach of the PC (Rousseau, 1989). Although dated, Robinson (1996) was seminal in finding that the reaction to breach depends on the level of trust the individual has in their employer, as this will affect their recognition and interpretation of the perceived breach. Individuals with low trust in the organization will respond less favorably than those with high trust and are more likely to remember the breach, whereas high trust individuals would be more likely to overlook the breach or give it less importance (Robinson, 1996).

Emotional responses to a perceived breach can be strong and range from anger, betrayal, disappointment, psychological distress, frustration, to moral outrage. Individuals may also change their behavior toward the organization by reducing their performance, acting out in less honorable ways, or may even consider leaving (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994). These responses serve to re-balance the PC and reduce internal conflict (De Vos et al., 2003).

Cassar and Briner (2011) outline the five characteristics or components of breach: delay, magnitude, type-form, inequity, and reciprocal imbalance. For example, breach can occur when there is a delay in the provision of perceived obligations (delay) or what is received is less than expected (magnitude) or it differs from what is expected (type-form). Inequity breach is experienced when the provision seems unfair compared to others and reciprocal imbalance when the individual perceives their contribution is greater than the other party. Cassar et al. (2013) believe that responses to breach will be influenced by these characteristics, and in trying to make sense of the behavior of others, causal attributions will be made, which may or may not be reliable (Rousseau and Tijoriwala, 1998).

Attribution theory posits the drive for individuals to try and understand and explain the behavior of others in order to provide a sense of security and predictability (Weiner, 1972). Explanations for the breach behavior are given either an internal or external cause and have been labeled as reneging, disruption, and incongruence (Rousseau, 1995; Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Reneging is an external attribution that attributes the blame to the organization and the breach is seen as intentional. Disruption is also an external attribution, but in this case the breach is viewed as beyond the organization's control. The experience of incongruence occurs when the breach is given an internal cause. In this case, divergence of beliefs around promises and obligations in the contract of both parties is identified and the other party is blamed. Behavioral responses will depend on the causal attributions made for the breach (e.g., Cassar et al., 2013) and the extent to which the breach is experienced is dependent on whether or not the organization is held responsible (Anderson and Schalk, 1998).

Rousseau (1995) identified and categorized the different responses to breach and these are referred to widely in the literature as: exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. These behavioral responses vary from leaving the relationship (exit), to voicing concerns (aggressive or considerate voice), ignoring the breach (loyalty) or acting out negative behaviors (neglect). Irrespective of the cause of the breach, it appears that the recipient will feel less injustice if an explanation is provided (Rousseau and Anton, 1988). Turnley and Feldman (1999) examined the relationship between breach and response to breach and found that responses to breach were affected by situational factors and the availability of alternatives. For example, individuals may not have the option to leave the organization (exit) or there may not be anyone in the organization who would listen to the individual's concerns. In both cases, responses to breach may then become an aggressive voice response and/or acting out neglect behaviors.

The Psychological Contract in a Higher Education Context

Koskina (2013) suggests the psychological contract concept generalizes to a wide variety of exchange relationships between individuals, individuals and organizations, as well as between organizations. Using the PC in HE is an under-researched area in education studies and in the wider psychological contract literature. There are fewer studies still on the PC in a HE context from a student perspective (O'Toole and Prince, 2015). Bathmaker (1999) looked at the PC between the institution and academic staff, and Wilson et al. (2009) examined the PC between students and teachers. Bordia et al. (2010) explored the PC of students with their final research project supervisor and found that students felt that supervisors were obligated to provide both practical and emotional support. They highlighted that students are often not fully aware of supervisors' workloads and this can often lead to misunderstanding and breach through unrealistic expectations of availability. Hornby-Atkinson et al. (2008) is the only study so far to have explored first-year students' ideas of the PC and compared these to their Lecturers'. Their findings indicated that students often have unrealistic expectations relating to availability, academic support and support for future careers, and are confused about expectations of independence at university. Lochtie et al. (2018) suggest the centrality of understanding and managing student expectations to student success, particularly during the transition to HE and through certain challenges.

The traditional conceptualization of the PC as a framework for employee-employer relationships was extended by Rousseau (1989) to include agents of the organization as a third party in the relationship. McCulloch (2009) identified the three key actors involved in relationships in HE; the student, academics, and administrators, and highlights potential issues relating to different agendas and different levels of power. Koskina (2013) extended the PC in the HE context to include students' belief that the contract was between three parties, the institution, tutors, and themselves, and explored students' perceptions of the obligations and expectations of them. Koskina (2013) proposed that universities are now sites of exchange in the minds of both students and the university. Students are under obligation to pay fees and carry out certain actions, e.g., attend lectures and submit assignments on time, and in return tutors provide lecture material and mark assignments. Whether explicit or implicit, these promises constitute the contents of the exchange relationship (Conway and Briner, 2005). Koskina (2013) also asserts that the real student PC is formed in the specific student-tutor relationship and that the quality of this provision is part of the exchange.

This research therefore focuses on the student PC in relation to one specific relationship, that which exists between first-year students and their personal tutors. Through semi-structured interviews it explores student perceptions of what is owed and what is given in return in this relationship and the consequences of a mismatch. The aim of this study therefore is to explore the usefulness of PC theory in a HE context to investigate expectations and experiences of the student-personal tutor relationship from the perspective of first-year undergraduate students.

METHOD

A case study approach was adopted as it had the potential to provide an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon and can also be used to understand other similar cases, situations or phenomena (Robson, 2002). Drawing on Thomas' (2011) identification of types, this study is both intrinsic (undertaken in order to understand the case) and instrumental (examining a case in order to gain insight into an issue or a theory). Silverman (2006) suggested that a case study is an instance of a broader phenomenon and though generalisability was not important, the single case study design has enabled the development of naturalistic generalizations, especially in relation to the meaning that participants attached to the PC. This approach therefore offered a more holistic understanding of subjective experiences and provided in-depth, multi-faceted detail into the phenomenon of the experience of personal tutoring. Whilst single case studies are often considered as a poor representation of a population, they are preferred when there is an attempt to modify existing theoretical notions (Stake, 2003). As such, this was the preferred method as the current study attempted to add to existing theoretical understandings of the PC of students in a HE context.

A purposive sample of six self-selected first-year undergraduate students came from the Psychology Department at a post-92 university in the North West of England. The case study university typically has over 70% of the student population coming from at least one underrepresented group and of specific relevance to this study, has 50% mature students. Support for the focus on psychology students comes from Yale (2017) who emphasizes the wide range of career outcomes for these students so they have the potential to offer insights into a diverse range of students. The research university operates a pastoral model of personal tutoring and students are offered both academic and pastoral support through one-to-one meetings. The personal tutor policy stipulates a minimum of four meetings in the first year of university and a further two meetings in years 2 and 3. A review of other similar post-92 universities in the North West suggests this minimum stipulation is fairly typical in those using a pastoral model of personal tutoring.

With permission of the institutional ethics committee and then the Head of Department, students were approached as a group ($n = 145$ students) at the end of a lecture by the researcher to ask for volunteers to participate in interviews. No incentives were offered. This resulted in eight interested students emailing the researcher for more information and after receiving this, two participants decided not to participate; six female participants then went on to be interviewed. The participants had some homogeneity in terms of their degree programme allowing for a more detailed examination of the psychological variability in the sample, as this fits with the individualized nature of the PC. Three of the participants were mature students (ages ranged from 38 to 49) who had come to university via the same access course at the case study university. All three mature students had children and two were single mothers. Revealed through the interviews, these participants were known to each other from the access course and after one had initially volunteered for this study, it had snowballed during their prior discussions, to the other two volunteering. The remaining three participants came directly to university from further education (ages ranged from 18 to 19). Two of these came from A-Level study and one from completing a BTEC at college. The rationale for the focus on students at the end of their first year was that the personal tutor is likely to play a greater role in their degree experience and they were also more likely to remember their first encounters with their personal tutor.

Semi-structured interviews were used with an open framework of questions regarding expectations and experiences of the personal tutor (Kvale, 2009). For example, *What kind of support should a personal tutor give?* and *How do your experiences compare?* (see **Appendix** for the full Interview Schedule). This framework was helpful in allowing students to identify particular interactions and events which were of importance to them and allows flexibility in following new lines of enquiry. In terms of the PC, Rousseau (1995) also suggests that interviews with individuals are important to capture the subjective nature of the contract and also the dynamic nature of contractual thinking. A limitation of this study is that it only looked at one side of the relationship but given that the construct is highly individualized this seemed a good place to start.

The interview data, once transcribed, was analyzed in two stages, firstly using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings from this were then subjected to the second stage analysis, using PC theory. The use of PC theory was exploratory in nature as only a few studies have used aspects of PC theory in HE and none so far exploring the student-personal tutor relationship. The aim therefore was to assess its usefulness in this context and to ascertain the relevance of using PC theory as a framework for understanding the students' PC with their personal tutor, leading to suggestions on how the PC can be used in a HE context.

In stage one, the initial IPA explored what the participants' experiences meant to them and how they understood their experiences through exploring their perceptions, beliefs, remembered events, feelings, judgements, evaluations, and behaviors (Larkin et al., 2006). By taking this inductive approach, IPA explored participants' perceptions of their own lived experience to provide a rich, holistic perspective and deep and meaningful insights, which can be drawn on in practice to inform thinking. The process involved exploring, describing, interpreting, and situating the means by which participants make sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). The analysis started with a detailed examination of each case before moving on to more general claims. Following initial case familiarization, emergent themes were identified for each case which were then clustered across all cases on the basis of similarity. Any differences and unique cases were also captured, in keeping with IPA's idiographic focus. The cluster themes were then interrogated against all data to identify and resolve non-confirmatory cases and finally super-ordinate themes were identified as overall representative themes of the data.

Stage two began by identifying potential frameworks through a literature review of the PC and identified two main research areas: contents of the PC and breach of the PC (Conway and Briner, 2005). The findings from the IPA were then interrogated by a systematic exploration and attempted application of each of the PC theories identified. Through this process, PC theory was used as a lens through which to explore their relationship with their personal tutor and to understand students' sense-making and responses to their experiences of their personal tutor. Conway and Briner (2005) highlight that PC theory is essentially about making sense of a phenomenon and suggest that forms of analysis which allow for subjective interpretations (such as IPA) are thus a good fit.

FINDINGS

The main focus of this section will be the findings from the second stage analysis of the interview data, which used a PC theory lens but will start with a brief overview of the IPA findings to contextualize the latter. A more detailed analysis of the IPA findings has been published elsewhere (Yale, 2019).

The IPA identified super-ordinate themes which related to different phases in the development of the relationship between students and personal tutor; Antecedents and Decision to meet, Developing the Relationship, and Consequences of Interactions. These were identified on the basis of either being representative of the sample or to highlight a uniqueness. How the relationship developed was dependent on the nature and consequences of interactions and these were impacted by a number of factors including, conflict around notions of student independence and personal tutor availability, and the perceived power and authority of the personal tutor. It revealed new insights into the relationship between student and personal tutor and identified areas of confusion and conflict around the nature of the relationship. Students talked in terms of reciprocity and exchange, which was more complex than the initial focus on expectations, suggesting PC theory might prove useful for further analysis, to elicit a greater understanding of the dynamics of the relationship.

In the second stage analysis the findings from the IPA were then scrutinized through a PC theory less to assess whether it had anything to offer in terms of exploring and understanding these new insights and complexities. The findings revealed two main themes of attributions and consequences of interactions. Sub themes within attributions also included; notions of independence, availability and power. The subthemes within consequences of interaction included social comparison and individual differences. Participant quotes have been chosen for inclusion in this section on the basis that they are either representative of the group and/or that they capture the essence of the phenomenon being explored (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008). A "p" followed by a number denotes the individual participant (e.g., p1 is participant number 1).

Attributions

There are many examples throughout the interviews where students experienced conflict in trying to make sense of their experiences of their personal tutor and attempt to rebalance their PC and resolve any conflicts and discrepancies through different attributions (Bordia et al., 2010). These are given either an external attribution or an internal attribution (Weiner, 1985). This sense making process was found to be influenced in favor of the personal tutor by feelings of trust in their personal tutor (Robinson, 1996). For others, this attribution process resulted in a perceived breach of contract by their personal tutor which had consequences for the ongoing relationship and beyond. The main sources of conflict for students included notions of independence, with confusion around the nature of personal tutor support and availability, which were complicated with perceptions of the personal tutor power and authority. These experiences will be explored through the application of PC theory.

Notions of Independence

All students had implicit notions of independence and this seems to have originated from previous educational experiences and rhetoric around university. How this translated to university life was a source of conflict for all students. Most felt that they were expected to be completely independent from the start. When the reality differed due to unfamiliar HE practices (such as academic referencing expectations) and help was needed to negotiate these new demands, students experienced uncertainty and strong negative emotions. According to Conway and Briner (2005) this discrepancy can be categorized as a breach in the type/form of support provided and also differed in terms of the magnitude of support, so that less support was given than the students expected. For students finding themselves in a position of having to ask for help, this has a number of consequences depending on the causal attribution made. For some this is attributed at the organizational level, referred to as reneging (Cassar et al., 2013) and is seen as an intentional failure to provide the appropriate level of teaching and learning experiences,

> "...we were kind of covering things that didn't really make any sense and didn't give any real reason as to why we would do it, it just seemed madness." (p6)

Three of the students made an internal attribution, blaming the personal tutor for intentionally withholding the means to become independent (referred to as incongruence by Cassar et al., 2013). For example,

> "...a little bit a bone of contention this really cos we did have stuff to do, and then a couple of weeks later we were told how to do it. . . which seemed a little bit of a mickey take really, it was as if you were kind of being... I think the impression of a lot of people was that you were kind of being set up to fail." (p6)

This offers supports for Robinson's (1996) assertion that the positioning of blame to internal causes is more likely when there is a lack of trust, as none of these three students had developed a positive relationship with their personal tutors.

Availability

Adding to the conflict around independence is confusion around the availability of the personal tutor which further complicates students negotiating support. The lack of availability of a personal tutor is interpreted in different ways and given negative or positive attributions, and students either internalized or externalized the reason (Rousseau, 1995; Morrison and Robinson, 1997). The source of the attributions made when trying to resolve the conflict differs depending on individual student differences and whether they feel they have developed a relationship with their personal tutor. Where trust existed in the relationship, a lack of availability, similar to the independence theme, is seen as reneging and externalized to blame the institution. This is also similar to Robinson (1996) in that responses to breach are influenced by the presence of trust in a relationship. Using (Rousseau, 1995) categorization of breach responses, this can be described as a considerate voice response, where the behavior is explained favorably. It could also fit with a loyalty response where no further action is taken and the student remains loyal, thereby restoring and maintaining the relationship. Any lack of availability was attributed to the personal tutor being too busy with research and other students. This was either viewed positively as the personal tutor being well-rounded, caring and knowledgeable, or negatively, as a personal tutor who does not care and prioritizes their own research over students. Students also blamed the institution directly for this lack of availability, as they felt that insufficient time was given for the personal tutor role. This lack of resourcing was further interpreted as the institution not valuing student support (and therefore students).

> "It's almost better if they're conducting research cause it makes them, I think it makes them a better tutor or… but then maybe I guess they'd be more available if they didn't have research or anything to conduct."(p1)

This quote demonstrates P1's efforts to make sense of her personal tutor's lack of availability, and the tension and conflict between the desire not to blame her personal tutor as they have a good relationship, and wanting her personal tutor to be more available.

The lack of personal tutor availability may also be perceived as an individual lack of interest and unwillingness by the personal tutor to help. This is explained as either a failing in the personal tutor or in the student themselves. When students perceived it as the personal tutor's fault, they adopted an exit response (Rousseau, 1995). Rather than leave the organization, as a disgruntled employee might, they exited the relationship and looked elsewhere for support, deciding not to engage further in the relationship with the personal tutor. This is consistent with (Turnley and Feldman, 1999) assertion that response to breach depends on situational factors and whether an alternative is available. For students who exit the relationship they had already identified other sources of potential support, such as another tutor. This is similar to Bordia et al. (2010) who suggest that not understanding a tutor's workload or the specific role expectations can often lead to an unrealistic PC so that breach becomes likely.

The following quote shows P5's struggle to try and resolve the conflict she feels around her personal tutor's lack of availability,

> "... they could be teaching, or like, you know doing research or something. I wouldn't expect to just knock on, I mean I know lunch breaks and everything, but they have to have their own space, like I know they are a personal tutor but I respect that they have their own things to teach, they've got their own research to do...but it's just difficult when you need something to know what to do." (p5)

This suggests a lack of clarity of expectations around her personal tutor's availability when needed, is a source of confusion. P5 tries to make sense of this with positive attributions in an attempt to maintain the relationship's equilibrium and avoid a breach of contract.

Power

An unseen yet strong influence on the attributions students make comes from the perception of power. There is an assumption and an acceptance from all students that personal tutors are in a position of authority and should be respected. This creates an imbalance and an inequity in the relationship where the personal tutor holds all of the power. There is a pronounced difference here between mature students and younger students in how they resolve this. Mature students seem aware of the power imbalance but are less affected, as age and experience seem to equalize it somewhat. Two of the three younger students adopted a teacher-pupil discourse, which served to reinforce the inequality and position themselves as the child with the tutor in a position of authority over them. When there is a perceived injustice in the relationship, they act out in child-like ways and talk of being "allowed" to ask questions,

> "...nobody's ever complained about, well that sounds rude saying complained, but nobody's ever said anything… and I think someone said that they are allowed to go through your like essay plans with you." (p1)

In trying to resolve this conflict and make sense of this inequity, students wanted explicit evidence of equity in the form of personal tutors being available every week for them in the form of office hours, whether they are needed or not. Another form of acting out behavior came from subverting the personal tutor process. Students still attended the meetings if they felt they had to but chose not to engage or share any problems (exit/neglect response) (Rousseau, 1995) and instead sought support from another tutor.

> "I only see her for essential stuff, I don't have the relationship with her, I'd rather go to ….as I feel a lot more comfortable with them, so I'd go to them."(p2)

This supports (Bordia et al., 2010) assertion that experiencing a breach can lead to a reduction in motivation and effort. They will also go to other tutors for support in a form of protest or to avoid future interactions with the personal tutor. Differences in social backgrounds may also contribute to the perceived inequity due to the absence of common frames of reference (Rousseau, 2001). Moreover, power differences affect willingness to share information regarding personal preferences which may act as a barrier to the relationship developing (Rousseau, 2003).

Responses and Consequences of Interactions

Responses, consequences of experiences and perceptions of breach are influenced by social comparisons students make with other students, and individual differences between students (i.e., age, locus of control) and these will form subheadings in this section.

The range of emotions experienced by students in response to perceived breach varied in intensity. Impact ranged from feeling rejected and not feeling cared for, to resentment at having to ask for help; frustration at not knowing whether to ask for help, to anger and feeling of injustice when not getting the help when it was needed. These emotions serve to rebalance the contract (De Vos et al., 2003). What seems to be the case is that the stronger the negative emotion, the more likely a negative behavioral response (exit, aggressive voice, neglect), which is consistent with Cassar et al. (2013).

> "I ended up asking * and * ended up helping me with it but first off, erm I ask (personal tutor) she was no help what so ever, she er emailed me back... she was like, 'I just don't have time to help you, I just don't have time', oh 'I'm not meeting up with people anymore', when I knew she was helping my friends!"(p3)

Responses to breach are also stronger when given an internal attribution and are viewed as the personal tutor's fault (as per the quote above), categorized as incongruence (Robinson and Morrison, 2000). One student (p5) seemed to experience a sense of moral outrage at the lack of apparent care through a lack of support and availability. This led her to question whether the degree was worth it and consider withdrawing. This is consistent with Koskina (2013) who found an interdependency between the three parties in the relationship, the student, personal tutor and the institution. Only when there is a breach of contract with the personal tutor is the PC with the institution called to mind and questioned.

Social Comparison

Responses to breach are influenced by social comparisons and students' individual differences. A strong source of information which students use to interpret their own personal tutor experiences is other students' experiences and comparing these to their own. This process of social comparison can result in either dissatisfaction and feelings of injustice at the inequity of support, or a strengthening of the relationship with their personal tutor and feelings of satisfaction. The following quote from P3 exemplifies this process of social comparison, which in this case, results in her feeling more satisfied with her personal tutor and a strengthening of the relationship bond.

> "Erm, I know some of my friends have come out of their initial tutor meeting and the (personal tutor) has basically said, if you've got a problem, go to counseling if you've got an academic problem, go to the person that is leading the module, any other reason, don't come to me. Haha, like you know…So in comparison, I've had quite a receptive person." (p3)

The contents of the PC are the promises made by the organization (Rousseau, 1995) and these need to be fair and fulfilled in an ongoing way for both parties to feel satisfied with the relationship. Comparing experiences with others is one way for students to ascertain whether their deal is fair.

> "I thought personal tutor meetings would be five ten minutes but each time for me it's been a good half hour proper half an hour. "(p4)
> "I know some people I've spoken to and they seem to, have quite long conv- and you know they're with their tutor for a while and I'm like five, ten minutes at most." (p1)

These quotes suggest that through social comparison of experiences of their personal tutor with other students, P4 is likely to feel more satisfied with her personal tutor, and P1 to be left with feelings of dissatisfaction with hers. P1, however, is also likely to feel a sense of injustice which could serve to undermine her relationship with her personal tutor and together with feelings of dissatisfaction, may result in a tendency to make more negative attributions of her personal tutor in the future.

Individual Differences

Age was also a factor which affected interpretations and response to breach and tends to moderate emotional responses in older students (Ng and Feldman, 2009). This is explained by Löckenhoff and Carstensen (2004) that older people are able to regulate their emotions better than younger people. Mature students seemed more at ease with asking for help as they did not see this as a lack of independence. In the following quote P6 describes feeling on the same level as tutors due to her age, which may indicate a weaker effect in terms of the power differential.

> "I don't know whether it's cos I'm older, I don't see you all as teachers kind of thing, and I respect you all I do, but I kind of feel like I'm on the same level in the sense that I can speak." (p6)

There are exceptions to this, however; when a mature student in the current study demonstrated an internal locus of control Rotter, 1966) and low self-confidence, she internalized the need for help as a weakness in her,

> "I don't like to bother people, unless I really, really need to, erm. And I have a fear that they will think I'm stupid."(p5)

It is likely, therefore, that for this student the effect will be somewhat reduced as she is less likely to see the organization as failing and is therefore less likely to perceive a breach. This is an example of the complex and confounding factors at play in determining an individual response to a breach event, e.g., implicit and explicit notions of independence and age, confounded by individual differences, such as the student's locus of control. As highlighted, earlier research supports that with age individuals have more tolerance for minor breaches due to a more flexible PC and are less likely to display exit or neglect behaviors (Ng and Feldman, 2009).

DISCUSSION

Key Findings

The present study aimed to understand the student-personal tutor relationship through a PC theory lens. The use of PC theory was exploratory in nature as only a few studies have used aspects of PC theory in HE and is novel in its application of PC theory to the student-personal tutor relationship. The aim therefore was to assess its usefulness in this context and to this specific relationship. The findings from this study provide strong support for the utility of the PC in a HE context; it also has much to offer in terms of understanding students' attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, this study offers insights into perceptions of the student PC and was able to uncover some of the more implicit aspects of the contract. It also illuminated some of the complexities of the attribution process and the ways in which students reason and attribute blame. Areas of potential conflict and breach were around notions of independence, personal tutor availability, with attributions influenced by perceptions of personal tutor power and social comparisons made with other students' experiences. Student interactions with their personal tutors were found to influence (both negatively and positively) shape, maintain and negotiate their relationships with both their personal tutor and the institution. The age and locus of control of the students was found to strongly influence the attribution process with older students being more resistant to the effects of breach.

An unexpected finding of this study is that all of the students have experienced breaches in their PC with their personal tutor, whether an actual breach or a perceived incongruence. The consequences of either can result in a variety of negative emotions, which in turn influence perceptions of the overall experience and satisfaction with the relationship. In all cases, students found different ways to attempt to rebalance their PCs with their personal tutors with more success and satisfaction experienced by students whose personal tutor had clearly articulated the role expectations early in the relationship. This meant that students could draw on this and experience less stress and uncertainty around the reasons for the breach. Those students with a more balanced and congruent PC were more able to adjust to any discrepancies and less likely to experience strong negative emotions. This effect was also stronger for mature students. Most importantly, having a well-developed relationship with the personal tutor was found to moderate any effects of breach, whether this related to the personal tutor relationship or wider experiences of the degree.

In relation to mature students, the findings indicate they are more resistant to the effects of breach and have a more flexible PCs than younger students. This may be due to mature students having more to cope with in everyday life than younger students, such as child care and financial stressors, which results in more determination to succeed as learners (Busher and James, 2019) and a stronger sense of resilience (Reay et al., 2009). Mature students were also found to be more at ease with asking for help and seemed less affected by the power imbalance between themselves and their personal tutor than younger students. It may be that a confidence gained from more life experiences meant they did not see asking for help as a lack of independence or as reflective of any personal deficits, in the same way as younger students did (Rousseau, 2001). The exception to this was the mature student with an internal locus of control who equated the need for help with her being "stupid." This highlights the necessity for individual differences to also be considered in models of support, thereby avoiding any assumptions of mature students. Certainly, the mature students in this study seemed to provide more complex reasoning in response to minor breaches compared to younger students, suggesting that the PCs of mature students should be handled differently.

The findings suggest that if the personal tutor role expectations were made explicit in the first meeting with the personal tutor, the student will persist with the relationship through evidence to the contrary and persevere through inconsistencies in support provision. When a personal tutor does not respond to requests to help within a given timescale, for example, the student will persist and attribute the lack of response was an error and as unintentional. In Situations where both parties have a shared understanding regarding their relational obligations, benefits accrue to both parties (Dabos and Rousseau, 2013). Reactions to these breaches in contract are more extreme and more emotional than if the there was no relationship, leading some students to question the worth of the degree and consider leaving university. Having to deal with these negative emotions can diminish student well-being (Bordia et al., 2010). This suggests therefore that such a PC breach incident requires intervention, as it is likely to influence other salient organizational outcomes such as the student experience and satisfaction (e.g., the National Student Satisfaction survey) (Cassar et al., 2013).

The findings offer further support for Bordia et al. (2010) who state the potential for a greater power imbalance in an educational context compared to a work environment, suggesting that students may be more vulnerable to negative consequences of breach because of this. One way to counter this effect is by a student developing a more relational PC with an agent of the organization, which can foster feelings of loyalty and security (Montes and Irving, 2008). Relational aspects include the development of trust and respect between student and personal tutor. This would in turn contribute to a stronger commitment to the organization (Rousseau, 2011) and greater well-being and satisfaction with the educational experience (Bordia et al., 2010) derived from a more fulfilling learning experience (Wade-Benzoni et al., 2006).

The kind of relationship may also moderate the relationship between breach (and component forms of breach) and attributions which may in turn influence the kind of elicited behavioral reactions. The distinction of stages in the PC development made by Herriot and Pemberton (1997) might provide a useful framework for approaching the personal tutor relationship through the mechanism of one-to-one meetings. First comes the *informing* stage where each party states their needs and what they offer in return, followed by *negotiation* and agreement of these, and then *monitoring* to check if each are happy with the other's contribution and then *renegotiation* of the contract to ensure both are satisfied on an ongoing basis. It is likely that this would lead to more a more explicit contract with a closer match in expectations. As Herriot and Pemberton argue, this is also likely to lead to a more trusting relationship and the avoidance of breach. They refer to these stages as "psychological contracting" which infers more of a process and seems to provide a better fit and more flexibility with students' changing and ongoing needs. This is an area for future research to consider using methods capable of capturing the ongoing and dynamic nature of the contract, such as a daily diary (Conway and Briner, 2005).

This study found many instances where the PC framework was useful for exploring and explaining students' expectations and experiences of personal tutoring and provided some interesting insights into the relationship from the student perspective. As with previous studies which have identified that agents of the organization play a key role in the PC (e.g., Guest and Conway, 2002), this study found that the personal tutor plays a vital role in the making and shaping of the PC through communication of what is expected and negotiating terms of the agreement between the personal tutor and student. Importantly, there is scope for HEIs to utilize PC theory more broadly in exploring the student PC with the institution in terms of understanding student expectations but also in the prevention of breach occurrences.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research has focused on student perceptions of the PC to provide insights into the student body. A key limitation of this is that it has only considered one side of the exchange relationship, however. The researcher acknowledges that the PC of the student with their personal tutor cannot be fully understood without considering the other party in the relationship, the personal tutor. Future studies should therefore aim to capture the personal tutor side of the contract to identify discrepancies with what students perceive to be the "deal" and to explore how the contract develops through reciprocal exchanges. In relation to the sample, half of the participants were mature students and whilst this is broadly representative of the case study university, it may not be representative of other HEIs. Therefore, any interpretation or application of these findings should be mindful of this. As a small sample was used for this study and given that the PC construct is highly individualized, a wider sample of interviews may identify some consistent features of the contract which could be used by personal tutors to enhance their practice and build positive relationships with students. As the interview questions were originally designed for the IPA in a previous study (Yale, 2019) and the introduction of the PC only came afterwards, *post-hoc* rationalization was undertaken to assess the relevance of the PC. Future studies should therefore include questions which build on the findings of this study (e.g., the theme of independence) to find out more about specific aspects of the PC construct (e.g., breach) in the student-personal tutor relationship. As this research relied on students' retrospective recall of their experiences, future research might consider using diary methods to capture the dynamic nature of contractual thinking. The findings are useful for those working within the UK but offer insights that could be transferred to other international contexts in terms of understanding the psychological contracts of their students with the personal tutor and the institution.

Given the potential for personal tutors to influence the PC the student holds with the institution, future research should focus on how the developing relationship contributes to shaping the PC. It would be interesting to further explore the salient events and the attributional mechanisms which underlie and lead to breach and the different factors which can influence responses to breach in students' PCs. As the current study also highlights the impact of subjective perceptions and individual differences impacting on interpretations of events, future studies could therefore consider the use of qualitative measures to assess the role and relevance of individual factors (e.g., locus of control and personality). It is also be important to study the quality of the relationship further as Luchak (2003) suggests that reactions to perceived breaches are a function of the relationship.

Recommendations for Institutions

The findings support recommendations for an extended transition phase and structured curriculum contact with the personal tutor. The expectations of the personal tutor and of the degree could thus stand as a firm foundation for the relationship and the student experience. From this, further opportunities for discussion and negotiation of the PC and any perceived breaches should also be provided so that the relationship can be built on and the consequences of breach avoided. This would also help students through the uncertainties of the transition to university and go some way toward guiding expectations of independence. The importance and value of the personal tutor relationship could also be clearly highlighted during this time so that the role would be seen as meaningful to them and given value. Changing the discourse around student support to one of collaboration, actioned through a clear and consistent framework, would reduce the negative emotions associated with uncertainties around specific areas such as those identified in this study of independence, availability, power imbalance, and the need for student support.

As Rousseau (1995) acknowledges, the ability to compete effectively may depend on contracts consistent with the expectations of customers and the flexibility demanded by both the technological change and the marketplace (i.e., the out-of-date literature does not reflect the context). Having a relationship in which obligations are mutually understood and fulfilled means students are more likely to experience overall satisfaction with the learning experience and a balanced PC. This has never been more important than in the current HE context where competition between universities is high. It is important to build on these findings to better reflect the current UK HE context and elicit more insights into the current student body. It is not simply the case that institutions should always meet and satisfy student expectations, as this study highlights that often these are idiosyncratic and unrealistic. It is not the case that one simple unilateral view of students will suffice due to multiple subjective realities and interpretations. Identifying and negotiating the PCs of individuals becomes a fundamental part of a productive relationship. Understanding the sense-making process around PC breach will help to inform understanding of future events, prevention and responses to breach (Conway and Briner, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The research supports the PC as a useful lens for examining perceptions of HE relationships between students and their personal tutor. Similar to O'Toole and Prince (2015), this study's findings question the perception of students as passive consumers of education and instead sees them as having active and social relationships. As the findings revealed, students are unclear what independence means and how to negotiate this and this can lead to a breach in PC arising from the conflict between needing support and believing that they should not need it. This points to a misunderstanding gap that is all too easy to fill with negative constructions of student as consumers, believing they are not prepared to work and want everything to be given to them. HEIs can therefore utilize the PC to understand more about students' expectations, attitudes and behaviors which should mean a move toward more positive constructions of students.

Crucial to a HEI's success, the research highlighted the centrality of preventing breach through its identification of some of the consequences of breach, not least of all the potential damage to the institution's reputation and an increase in student withdrawal. This research suggests that explicit articulation of expectations from the first meeting and ongoing negotiations would foster more positive relationships with students and help to mediate (and hopefully prevent) some of the effects of breach. Supported by this research and wider PC research (e.g., Conway and Briner, 2005) the application of PC theory is not limited to a UK HE student-personal tutor relationship and could potentially be applied to any relationship.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by Edge Hill University Research Ethics Committee. Written informed consent to participate in this study was provided by the participants.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some of the content of this manuscript may overlap with the author's thesis but has not been published elsewhere and can be accessed online, in line with the author's university policy. Reference to the thesis is included in the References List.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

APPENDIX INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Before coming to university

1. What did you do before you came to University?
2. Can you tell me about any previous experiences of a personal tutor before you came to university?
3. Before coming to university -What did you expect a personal tutor to be like?
4. Did you have information regarding Personal Tutors before you came to university?

At University

1. What have been your experiences of personal tutoring so far?
2. How often do you meet with your personal tutor? -how many meetings?
3. Why do you meet with your personal tutor?
4. Would you go and see your personal tutor outside a planned meeting if you needed something?-reasons?-method of asking?
5. What do you think a personal tutor is for?
6. What kind of support should a personal tutor give?- personal issues or academic?
7. How do your experiences compare?
8. What kind of things do you talk about in the meetings?
9. Do you think a personal tutor is needed?
10. Is your personal tutor approachable?
11. Do you think they are available as much as they should be?-would like to be?
12. Can anyone be a personal tutor?
13. Can you give me an example of a positive experience you have had with your personal tutor?
14. Can you give me an example of a negative experience you have had with your personal tutor?
15. Overall what have your experiences with your personal tutor been like?
16. In an ideal world what would you like from a personal tutor?-what could be improved? what would you change?
17. Is there anything you feel you would like more support with?
18. Do you get support from anywhere else?-support services/ other tutors/ other students/ family
19. What other support are you are aware of at the university?-have you accessed support?-what was your experience?
20. If you had a problem who would you go to?
21. What do you think your role in the personal tutor relationship is?
22. Do you think it is important to have a relationship with a personal tutor?-please explain
23. Is there anything else you would like to add?

frontiers in Education

BRIEF RESEARCH REPORT
published: 28 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00120

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Student Voice in Personal Tutoring

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This study focuses on student voices within personal tutoring at the University of Lincoln. It asks the questions: What do students think of their personal tutoring experience at the University of Lincoln? Do students see themselves as partners with their tutors? What language do they use to describe this relationship? How does the experience of international students compare with home students? Before completing the investigation, a literature review was conducted in order to help answer the above questions. Literature around the student voice in personal tutoring and engagement in tutoring was investigated to help to understand the personal tutoring relationship and the idea of partnership. Personal tutoring generally was researched, and personal tutoring of international students. The study began with an online survey, open to any students within the university, around their experiences of personal tutoring. Subsequently, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 students across the four colleges of the university, with three of the four colleges being well-represented. It was found in the interviews that a good proportion of students would seek advice from their personal tutors first about a range of issues. However, a number of students maintained that they would approach the most relevant person directly. The majority of students experienced a positive relationship with their personal tutors. However, a small number found their tutor distant or unfamiliar. Group tutorials were largely found to be useful spaces for students to express their voices. Differences were identified in the experience of international students, most saying that they would contact friends, and relatives before using their personal tutor or university services for personal issues. Some noted that tutors went above and beyond what would be expected of a personal tutor. In conclusion, it is recommended that all staff receive training on referrals, and tutors responsible for international students should receive more training, particularly around helping students transitioning into the culture of the UK. The findings of the study indicate that personal tutors could play an important role in enabling students' voices to be heard and could be a vital source of help for international students transitioning into UK Higher Education.

Keywords: personal tutoring, student voice, international students, higher education, student engagement

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
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Reviewed by:
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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *10 January 2020*
Accepted: *16 June 2020*
Published: *28 July 2020*

Citation:
Raby A (2020) Student Voice in Personal Tutoring. Front. Educ. 5:120. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00120

INTRODUCTION

The student-centered focus of Higher Education influenced by the 2012 increase in tuition fees and questions around the relationships between universities and students has meant that universities have emphasized the personalization of the learning experience. This has brought personal tutoring and its effectiveness into the forefront of ongoing discussion and investigation (Lochtie et al., 2018).

This has led to an increase across the sector in developing and improving tutoring provision (Grey and Osborne, 2018).

This study is particularly focused on listening to students' voices around their personal tutoring experience, and attempts to answer the questions:

- What do students think of their personal tutoring experience at the University of Lincoln?
- Do students see themselves as partners with their tutors? What language do they use to describe this relationship?
- How does the experience of international students compare with home students?

The study took place in the University of Lincoln, beginning with an online survey and followed by interviews with 30 students across the university.

The research is situated in the interpretative paradigm, as it attempts to understand and describe the lived experiences (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012) of the students. This paradigm involves the view that truth is subjective and reality is socially constructed (Cohen et al., 2009). It is also important to consider the multi-cultural aspects involved in the study. It is acknowledged that student behavior may be context dependent, and that attitudes are instrumental in their views of the personal tutoring experience. As students and tutors are from many different countries and backgrounds, perceptions may be shaped by cultural contexts, which will in turn affect views of the personal tutoring relationship (Wisker et al., 2008). In a university where there are diverse cultures, this cannot be overlooked. It may be worth considering that as both a Senior and Personal Tutor within the university, the researcher is part of the world under review, and therefore an insider within the personal tutoring community. According to Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009), in qualitative research, the researcher's role is intimate and direct, impacting on the collection and analysis of the data. They also maintain that the personhood of the researcher and whether he or she is a member of the group under study, is "an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation" (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 55). It is therefore important to be aware of this to mitigate any potential bias.

This paper examines the literature around personal tutoring, the student voice, and international students, before outlining the methods used and results gained from the study. Some conclusions and recommendations will then be shared, along with suggestions for further investigation.

WHAT IS PERSONAL TUTORING?

Personal tutoring has a long tradition in the UK, beginning with the Oxbridge colleges, where students had a specific member of staff identified as the person who would give guidance on personal, moral and academic issues (Wheeler and Birtle, 1993). Over the years, this tradition spread to other institutions, where tutors have varying degrees of involvement with their tutees (Wheeler and Birtle, 1993). The literature highlights three important areas: types of personal tutoring, relationships in personal tutoring and impact of personal tutoring.

Types of Personal Tutoring

Earwaker (1992) identified three distinct models of personal tutoring: pastoral (in which a tutor provides personal and academic support), professional (in which students are referred to central services), and integrated curriculum (in which tutorials are part of timetabled provision). Currently, most institutions operate a hybrid of these models (McFarlane, 2016).

Relationships in Personal Tutoring

The relationship between a student and their personal tutor can be crucial to those students who choose to take advantage of this service. Several researchers have emphasized the importance of this relationship, including Laurillard (2002), who states that student and tutor dialogue is essential for effective learning. In a similar way, Chickering and Gamson (1987) state that this contact is important for student motivation and participation. Thomas (2012) emphasizes the importance of the human element of education, and Wilcox et al. (2005) discuss the essential nature of the role of social support for first-year students.

Stephen et al. (2008) conducted a study into students' experiences of the personal tutoring support they received at university. Students emphasized a need for a caring, empowering relationship with their personal tutor, who should be empathic and proactive in the support they offer. This confirms the above findings that the role of social support is fundamental to students feeling settled and that personal tutors are in an ideal position to deliver this. Wootton (2006) uses the word "conduit" to describe the role of the personal tutor (p. 118), who should direct the students to specific services for support. In Freeman's (2014) study, personal tutorials were viewed as useful ways for students to give feedback in an informal setting. This was considered a more authentic way than taking part in surveys. It appears that the tutoring relationship could benefit from a two-way approach, with students giving feedback to tutors and tutors directing students for support.

Impact of Personal Tutoring

Seale (2010) carried out a study which identified supportive tutors as one of four factors which students claimed assisted their learning. Lochtie (2016) similarly found that students interviewed cited personal tutoring as one of the main reasons they chose to remain on their course. This reinforces Thomas's (2012) findings that personal tutors are able to improve the retention and success of students.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDENT VOICE IN PERSONAL TUTORING

There are a number of issues to consider regarding the importance of the student voice in personal tutoring. Some of these issues include quality assurance, power relationships and empowerment, and participation, or lack of participation. These issues are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Various Aspects of Student Voice

McLeod (2011) identifies four areas in which voice is used in education: voice as a strategy to achieve, e.g., empowerment;

voice as participating in learning and processes; voice as a right to be heard; and voice as expression of difference to promote inclusion, diversity and equity. McLeod (2011) defines voice as not only speech, but also identity, power, a place for genuine reflection and insight, or representation of differences. In addition, Seale (2010) notes the two main purposes for student voice work as quality assurance and staff development. Similarly, Freeman (2014) identifies consumer choice, accountability, democracy and power sharing, student identity, and enhancement of provision as the areas involved in student voice. These definitions, and the belief that participation involves respecting the student voice, inform this study.

Quality Assurance

In terms of quality assurance, Brooman et al. (2015) state that the involvement of students in educational development is becoming more widespread and is largely seen as advantageous. However, they also express concern that it is mainly focused on quality assurance, whereas "student voice" should involve students having more control so learning development becomes less educator-focused.

Power-Distance Relationships and Empowerment

Power-distance relationships is a further aspect to consider in terms of student voice. Seale (2010) mentions that there is a lack of consideration around student-staff power relationships, leading to a lack of thought around equality and empowerment. She states that there is scope to examine, through the student voice, the experiences of students who may feel oppressed, if, for example, they lack the academic skills necessary to participate in the culture of the institution. This could be particularly pertinent for international students, who may lack the academic English skills they require. Seale (2010) also asks if higher education is only interested in one kind of student voice: that which does not seek equality. McLeod (2011) discusses the problem of the "selective bestowing of voice" (p.179), and maintains that allowing a variety of voices to be heard can be unsettling. Consistent with Seale (2010) thinking, McLeod (2011) describes voice as being related to equity, and goes on to outline how voice could involve listening and recognition, rather than simply expression. Seale (2010) also states that dialogue between the tutor and student requires humility on the part of the tutor, that they should not set themselves far apart from the student. This echoes Freire's (1990) thinking around the tutor-student relationship, in which education should be tutor and student discovering together that which they desire to know.

On the other hand, Earwaker (1992) argues that some imbalance of power in the student-tutor relationship is necessary, as the tutor needs to manage interactions and have the influence to respond to issues. This, he maintains, does not necessarily disadvantage the student. It appears that careful management of this relationship is therefore necessary, and needs to be questioned further.

Carey (2013) case study identifies an imbalance of power between students and tutors, sometimes made evident in the language tutors use to describe the curriculum. Students noted that it was the ones confident at speaking who were most likely to be heard, leading to the idea that some students may be empowered and some may be constrained. This again asks the question of whose voices staff are listening to, and what language students and tutors use to discuss the student-tutor relationship. Freeman (2014) also discusses language, describing the NSS as mechanistic, using language which places students in a passive role and tutors in a more active role. This, she argues, reinforces the distance between students and tutors. Walker (2018) argues that the personal tutor role should consider student and tutor as equals, using an approach which is non-hierarchical. One of the ways this could be achieved is for staff to become more aware of the language they use in order to minimize power-distance relationships.

Participation and Lack of Participation

An important aspect of student voice is participation or lack of participation. Seale (2010) recognizes the importance of what students are not saying, and conducted a project investigating the e-learning of students with disabilities. The study found that the students were proficient in the use of technology, emphasizing what they can, rather than cannot do. This could also be related to international students: if tutors can focus on what that students can do, it may encourage students to develop further. The main drawback to this study is that students self-selected to take part, so it may be that only those able and willing to give their views did so, whereas other voices may have gone unheard. McLeod (2011) also mentions this problem: that when voice is equated with empowerment, silence is a potential problem. This prompts the question of what counts as voice, and whose voices are recognized (p. 184): an important question, and central to the study being undertaken. In Freeman's (2014) study, collecting the views of students, it is stated whether a single voice or a number of participants held a certain view. It was important to identify the views of a minority of students, to ensure that all voices were heard. Students identified within informal settings an imbalance of power in the way the university positioned students and academics.

Macfarlane and Tomlinson (2017) offer a critique of student engagement, and Gourlay (2015) also offers an alternative perspective: that of the "tyranny of participation." Gourlay's (2015) study questions what is meant by participation, and states that this could become restrictive and "culturally specific" (p. 403). The paper concludes by stating a need to reframe the idea of student engagement, which is often seen as that which is "communicative, recordable, public, observable and often communal" (p. 404). She goes on to state that quiet listening and thinking are not seen as indicators of engagement and raises the issue of the value of the activities of listening, silence and thinking alone. This brings into question what counts as participation, and could be particularly relevant for international students, who may not be used to making their voices heard.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The limited research suggests that students from different backgrounds are likely to respond to personal tutoring in different ways. International students are one such group, so this group will be investigated in further detail.

General Information

According to HESA (2018), in 2016–7, 6% of students in UK HE were from EU countries other than the UK, and 13% from countries outside the EU. Many of these students originate from China. For the purposes of this study, international students refers to all students from outside the UK. Most UK universities have departments dedicated to support of international students (Laycock, 2009), including services such as advice and English language assistance.

International students cannot be considered a homogenous group, as there are many "within-group differences" (Poyrazli and Lopez, 2007, p. 276). It cannot be assumed that because a student comes from a particular country, they will behave in a certain way.

There may also be differences in the way that personal tutoring is conducted between under- and post-graduate levels. For instance, in some universities, program leaders act as personal tutors for post-graduate students.

Student Participation in Personal Tutoring

Welikala and Watkins (2008) conducted a study of 40 international postgraduate students, who were interviewed about their experiences of learning in the UK. They found that many international students believe that it is the tutor's place to speak and the student should not question. It could be easy for teachers to assume that such "quiet" students are not engaged, or even do not understand, when in fact they are thinking deeply about a subject, giving it the attention they believe it deserves. For such students a personal one-to-one with a tutor could be incredibly beneficial, as they may not have the confidence or desire to speak out in a larger group. Taking the time to sit and listen and wait for a student to formulate thoughts could contribute to that student feeling valued and respected. Welikala and Watkins (2008) further state that tutors should not misunderstand international students being quiet as passive learning, as in some learning cultures, a formal classroom setting is not an appropriate environment for questioning. This reinforces the view that being silent does not necessarily indicate lack of engagement, but may have cultural significance. Students in this study stated that international student voices are not heard, as the voices of home students leave no space for others. They reported a discrepancy between the way the university claims they conduct teaching, i.e., student-centered, and what actually happens, explaining that home students were allowed to dominate discussions. Additionally, McDonald (2014) interviewed international postgraduate students, and found that students were highly unlikely to question academic staff.

Support Offered by Personal Tutors

Lochtie's (2016) study compares the personal tutoring support UK international students receive with that of the support in the USA, where "Academic Advising" is carried out by professional advisors, many of whom are graduates. He concludes that there are lessons to be learnt from the system in the USA, although professional advisers may not necessarily be the way forward, particularly where universities have international offices. International students interviewed stated that they would like tutors to be willing to go the extra mile in their support to help them overcome culture shock and adapt to a new environment, and UKCISA (2018) reports that Chinese students would prefer their tutors to be more proactive. However, there is a danger in doing too much for students, as this may not help them to develop as independent learners (Bartram, 2009). Earwaker (1992) describes this as the "paradox" of helping. It is therefore a question of tutors striking a balance between assisting the student and helping them to become autonomous.

Personal Tutoring Relationships

The personal tutoring relationship between tutors and international students may be different from the relationship a tutor might have with home students. Typically, international students see a tutor as a person in authority and maintain a respectful distance (Wheeler and Birtle, 1993). Thus, the power-distance within this relationship would be greater than that of the personal tutor and home student. This could have an effect on the extent to which the student feels confident in expressing their views or asking for help (Welikala and Watkins, 2008), and also on the extent to which they view themselves as partners. Wisker et al. (2008) state that it can be difficult for tutors to form a relationship as equals with some international students. McDonald (2014) affirms this, in finding that international students were reluctant to speak to an academic, and may therefore miss out on important support.

A recent UKCISA (2018) study of Chinese students' perception of personal tutoring found that the tutoring relationships in the three higher education institutions studied were not working optimally, and that students had no idea of the purpose of tutorials. The benefit of this study was that it allowed students to submit their answers in Chinese, thus eliminating the possibility of misunderstanding. However, the study did not compare with home students' views, so it may be that they experience similar issues. This is an issue which requires further investigation, and one which this study hopes to address.

Training for Personal Tutors

McDonald (2014) recommends that staff responsible for international students receive training to support them in this role, particularly in the misinterpretation which can occur if tutors mistake respect and deference for lack of confidence or ability. Lochtie (2016) agrees that more support for these tutors is necessary. McFarlane (2016) also calls for more training for personal tutors, not only for those responsible for international students. Following this recommendation may be useful for enhancing personal tutoring for international students.

The findings from the literature review indicate that there are still unanswered questions and opportunities for further research. One of the areas which would be useful for practice was to discover the personal tutoring experience of students in my institution, and particularly how the experiences of international students differed. In the literature little evidence of students viewing themselves as partners was found, so this question was also significant. These research questions informed the survey and interview questions which will be discussed in the following sections.

RESEARCH METHODS

A mixed-methods approach was used in obtaining the data required for the study. The research instruments used to gather the required data were an online survey open to all students at the university, followed by 30 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. The online questionnaire asked 13 questions around how often students met with their tutors and for what purpose, whether they attended group sessions and whether they found them useful. Questions were also asked in both the online questionnaire and interviews around materials provided as part of an OfS-funded project to enhance tutorials; however, these questions have not been considered in this study as most students were not aware of the materials. The questions from the online questionnaire informed the further questions asked in the interviews. The interview questions were constructed in collaboration with two other members of staff who were experienced personal or senior tutors. The questions (**Appendix**) were piloted with a student representative, who suggested the addition of question 9: "Is there anything else that you'd expect from your personal tutor?" Demographic questions were asked first, followed by questions around the students' personal tutoring experience. Most of the questions were open, allowing students to elaborate upon their responses. Where the questions were closed or encouraged a binary response, students were prompted to elaborate. The questions were modified as they were asked, as some of them may not have been easily understood by students, for example, question 5 asks "If you had a pastoral issue, who would you go to?" The interviewer explained and gave examples of what might constitute a pastoral issue. However, there could be a danger in this as it may suggest ideas to respondents rather than them thinking of their own ideas (Passer, 2017). To ameliorate this, respondents were encouraged to think beyond initial ideas.

Convenience and snowball sampling methods were employed to ascertain those who were available and willing to be interviewed (Cohen et al., 2009). This was thought to be the most effective way of ensuring student engagement. Additionally, students who had already been approached suggested other fellow students who may be willing to participate. Respondents were invited by their personal tutors, who were informed of the request via the Senior Tutors' Forum. Being a member of the Senior Tutors' Forum meant that this was a convenient way to publicize the research. The student representative from the School of Pharmacy personally invited fellow colleagues from her course in addition to this. Students were given a £10 Amazon voucher for taking part in the interviews, which took between 15 and 30 min to complete. The relatively short nature of the interviews meant that respondents would be unlikely to suffer from fatigue. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's central system, and all respondents signed an informed consent form. Student names were kept anonymous throughout the study, by use of numbering.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Thirty students were interviewed over a period of 2 months. The respondents were interviewed in a meeting or tutorial room on the university campus, by an academic who was not their personal tutor. The interviews provided around 2,000 words of data per interview. Most of the participants were interviewed individually; however, two of the international students were interviewed together in order to maximize their confidence in responding in English.

The research sought to obtain transparency, dependability and trustworthiness, which is essential for reliability and validity (e.g., Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Golafshani, 2003). Throughout the process, transparency was strived for, in, e.g., constructing the questions along with other staff members, taking a reflective approach, and being careful not to make bold claims based on the data.

After conducting the interviews, the audio files were transcribed by the researcher, and coded with use of NVivo. Transcripts were coded thematically, around subjects connected with the students' personal tutoring experience. As the ontological questions address the nature of students' lived experiences, it was decided that *in vivo* coding would better reflect the various realities of the participants. According to Saldana (2016), coding has an iterative nature, and is unlikely to be completed as a linear process. This indeed was found to be the case, as codes were created initially and on a second reading were changed or placed in a hierarchy above or below an existing code.

RESULTS

Survey Results

One hundred and sixty seven students responded to the online survey from across the university, mainly in years 1–3, with some in year 4 and some postgraduate. The key findings from this were that 70% of students reported that they attend their group tutorials, although tutors reported the reverse. This discrepancy could be due to the fact that the students completing the survey were typically more engaged with the personal tutoring system. The main reason students reported seeing their personal tutor was for academic support, although 24% mentioned that they would see their tutor for personal issues. 41% of the students stated that academic support was the most valued aspect of personal tutoring, and 38% mentioned that it was just "knowing someone is there."

Interview Results

Following the online survey, 30 students were interviewed from the four colleges within the university. The students were asked set questions (**Appendix**); however, they were asked to elaborate on certain responses, or further questions were asked if necessary. **Table 1** shows the number of students from each college, and **Table 2** shows the level of study. Twelve of

TABLE 1 | Number of students per college.

College	Number of students	Percentage (%)
College of science	9	30
College of arts	8	27
College of social science	2	7
Lincoln international business school	11	37

TABLE 2 | Number of students per year of study.

Year of study	Number of students	Percentage (%)
1	7	23
2	5	17
3	9	30
4	2	7
Postgraduate	7	23

TABLE 3 | Number of students by country of origin.

Number of students	Country of origin
1	Austria
1	Bangladesh
2	China
1	Colombia
1	Ghana
1	India
1	Japan
2	Thailand
2	Vietnam

the students interviewed were international students, from the countries indicated in **Table 3**.

Question 1 Responses: What Do Students Think of Their Personal Tutoring Experience at the University of Lincoln?

On the whole, students reported a positive experience with their personal tutors, commenting that they saw their tutor as "friendly," "helpful," or "supportive," e.g. Others stated: "They have created an environment that they're here for you;" "Nice to know you've got a person assigned to you;" and even: "I can cry with him if I need to." Students value the fact that their tutors are approachable, available, and informal but professional. Most students were happy with the level of support received; however, some noted that they would like their tutor to be more proactive. One student maintained that the support received was well balanced, stating: "It's good that they don't baby us." This relates to Earwaker's (1992) paradox of helping, and highlights the difficulty of maintaining an appropriate balance of helping and enabling the students to be independent. Some students reported that their tutors go over and above what is expected of them: "they already do more than I would expect them to do."

However, a small number of students stated that the relationship they have with their tutors was "unfamiliar," as they did not have regular contact with them. Some of these students would prefer to have a tutor in their subject area, with whom they have regular contact.

Some would approach their personal tutor first, particularly if they were experiencing problems: "I always go to my personal tutor, and then see, maybe he'd direct me to people and I would then go to them as well, but I'd go to my personal tutor."

Other students would go directly to the most relevant person within the university able to deal with their issues. This could be a program or module leader, or a university service such as the library, well-being or support center, or the Students' Union. It seems that some students need or prefer the personal tutor to act as a "conduit" (Wootton, 2006), whereas others are comfortable directly approaching the most relevant person. It would be interesting to discover if these students share any common characteristics.

Students approach their personal tutors for a wide variety of reasons. Although the university policy is for tutors not to act as counselors, students still seek their help for mental health issues. Some of the reasons students mentioned are:

- Coursework, grades
- Career advice
- Dissertation
- Mental health issues
- Information on relevant services
- Financial help
- Assurance
- Forms signing
- References
- Extensions
- Workload
- General pastoral care.

It is not surprising, therefore, that tutors often need more training in the support they give to students. McFarlane (2016) suggests that due to the expectations of tutors, it is important to provide training.

In addition to one-to-one appointments with personal tutors, students also receive scheduled group tutorial sessions, approximately two sessions per semester, although this varies across colleges. Students in subject areas such as Pharmacy have to attend their sessions to achieve professional accreditation, and therefore report more engagement with these sessions.

Group tutorials are seen by a good proportion of students as a space where their voices can be heard and they can give feedback on aspects of their experience at university. One student stated: "our personal tutor is quite interactive, so it's quite helpful that we all find them approachable, that becomes much easier, makes things much easier to discuss in group sessions."

Students reported the sessions as having a relaxed atmosphere, useful discussions, and the opportunity to air common problems. In some colleges, group sessions are used as academic skills workshops, and others for informal discussion. Group sizes range from 6 to 30, and, unsurprisingly, those students in small groups reported more willingness to discuss and an overall more positive experience.

On the negative side, some students reported a general lack of attendance at the group sessions, that they were unwilling to raise issues in a group or that the sessions were "pretty useless." Their suggestions included more individual sessions, more subject-specific help, and some suggested seeing their tutor more frequently.

Students largely found the resources useful, although many were not aware of them until the interview, and many stated they would return to them to use as and when necessary.

Question 2 Responses: Do Students See Themselves as Partners With Their Tutors? What Language Do They Use to Describe This Relationship?

Students who had worked with members of staff on projects generally reported feeling as "equals," and "they are open to our ideas and suggestions"; however, the language used did not always reflect this. Phrases such as "it's up to me to adapt," "he would tell me what to do and send me on my way," and "aiding them" place staff firmly in supervisory roles, with the students as assistants. One student reported a discrepancy between what the university said they do and what actually happens and used the phrase "we are about 80% equals," concurring with Welikala and Watkins (2008) findings.

Most students feel that they have a voice, and that tutors give everyone an opportunity to speak. On the whole, they feel listened to and that their feedback is acted upon. Personal tutors encourage interactivity and encourage students to feel confident. One student stated: "Everyone's got a voice here," and others concurred with this.

However, some stated that only one or two students contribute to the sessions, concurring with McLeod's (2011) idea of selective bestowing of voice. Some stated that they would not feel confident saying something if it could be taken the wrong way, that they did not feel comfortable speaking in a large group, or that it was difficult to get others talking: "I feel like I'm the group spokesperson." This echoes Carey (2013) research that it is the ones confident at speaking who are most likely to be heard.

Question 3 Responses: How Does the Experience of International Students Compare With Home Students?

The largest observed difference with the majority of the international students was that they would rather contact friends and family, often in their home country, than speak to a tutor about personal issues: "Maybe we just talk to each other"; "I talk with my family, my mum and my friends in Thailand." This reiterates the findings of Welikala and Watkins (2008) and McDonald (2014), who state that international students may be more reluctant to ask for help. Most stated that they were happy to contact their tutor for academic issues, however. As discovered in the literature review, it may be that cultural differences mean that international students have a more distant relationship with their tutors, and therefore would not want to approach them about personal matters.

The students interviewed appeared to be comfortable in expressing their views in a group; however, a few stated that they would only mention issues in extreme cases: "I will prefer not to say anything... I'm not confident to talk in a group meeting... if I have something important, I will talk about it."

The international students interviewed had no experience of working alongside staff on any projects, possibly because most of them were relatively new to the university. Neither was there any indication that they saw themselves as partners, affirming Wisker et al. (2008) mention of the difficulty for tutors and international students to form a relationship as equals.

Some of the international students discussed their struggles with the English language, and mentioned that their tutor was willing to help them with grammar and academic writing. Some indicated they appreciated their tutor using "easy to understand" language, and one said that her tutor did much more than she would expect and that which she had experienced in her home country: "I really feel very well cared for"; "it's really more than I would expect of any tutor to do for us."

A group of international direct entry students into level 3 were provided with bespoke tutorials around transitioning into study in another culture, and these students stated that the sessions they received were incredibly beneficial. On the use of case studies, one student stated: "This case is very easy to understand. It had a lot of the same problems as me." These students stated that they would prefer more of this support, in agreement that more intercultural support would be beneficial (Lochtie, 2016), and support should continue beyond induction Leask and Carroll (2011).

DISCUSSION

Although this study was limited by the fact that the students who took part were arguably more engaged with personal tutoring, some tentative findings have been presented.

The first point to note is that all student-facing members of staff can be seen as personal tutors: many students would approach the most relevant person concerned, whether a personal tutor or another member of academic or support staff. As a result, a sensible approach would be to provide training to all staff enabling them to act as effective gatekeepers to support students. Referral of students is not always straightforward, and requires careful handling (Wisker et al., 2008). It may be interesting to conduct further study into the network of support students rely on, and where the personal tutor fits within this.

Personal tutoring sessions could be a useful vehicle for students to feedback on aspects of their university experience, and an opportunity for their voices to be heard in a more informal setting than a survey. To achieve this, it is recommended that group tutorial sizes are small, or students are given more opportunities for one-to-one meetings. It should not be assumed that if a student is not expressing themselves vocally, they are not engaging with the sessions. Alternative vehicles for students to express their voice could be considered within personal tutoring provision.

Partnership and listening to the student voice within personal tutoring is another area which would be interesting to explore further, and ways to listen to "quieter" students could be investigated. It seems to require more effort on behalf of the tutor to listen to the voices of international students, as they may not always be willing to share their views or issues. These findings concur with the literature explored which stated that international students do not always access the support available (Welikala and Watkins, 2008; McDonald, 2014). Tutors of international students should receive training specifically around interaction with students of different cultures, and be prepared to be more proactive in their support, taking time to cultivate a relationship. It is also apparent that international students appreciate support in transitioning to another culture, as suggested by Lochtie (2016), and the personal tutor could be ideally placed to deliver this. More research could be carried out to ascertain the type of support international students might require.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that further research is required in many of the areas discussed. For example, tutors could benefit from further discussion around how much support is the 'right' amount to give. This would be different for different groups of students, for example, international students may require more support, and those who are prepared to approach the most relevant person directly would require less.

This paper has emphasized that personal tutors have an incredibly important role to play in providing an outlet for the student voice, particularly those whose voices are not regularly heard. They could also be crucial in helping international students in their transition from education in their home country to that within the UK. It has also suggested areas for further research which could enhance the personal tutoring experience of students.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by University of Lincoln. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

FUNDING

This project was funded by the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Ben Walker and Janice Kearns, who assisted with writing the interview questions. Janice Kearns also carried out two of the interviews with students.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.00120/full#supplementary-material

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY
published: 09 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00105

Working With Me: Revisiting the Tutorial as Academic Care

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Tutoring in one form or another is a consistent feature in the higher education learning experience. However, the tutorial relationship involves an intricate mix of intra and interpersonal dynamics which influence short and long-term learning. In this paper, work from a phenomenological study of distance learning students provides transferable insights about the immediate and lasting impact of the tutorial relationship. Ideas from Heideggarian hermeneutic phenomenology are translated to the context of contemporary higher education to establish how achieving a sense of being-with has affective implications to help students to strengthen resilience and the capacity to challenge, confirm and develop confidence in their new learning, thinking and actions. The discussion introduces and unravels the nature of academic care in relation to working with learner vulnerability to enhance ability. Re-conceptualizing the tutorial as a form of academic care can provide support and security for learners at a time of unsettlement without lessening their autonomy. We argue that by creating an atmosphere of academic care, learners are empowered and inspired to be courageous and curious, both in the immediate and longer-term. The discussion refocuses the tutorial relationship through ideas and applied strategies for successful future-facing tutoring practices, without major upheaval to the existing operational tutoring infrastructure within the HEI.

Keywords: academic care, curiosity, hermeneutic phenomenology, higher education, transformation, tutorial relationship, self-connected learning

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
Liz Thomas,
Edge Hill University, United Kingdom

Reviewed by:
Helen Louise Holder,
Keele University, United Kingdom
Michelle Morgan,
Consultant, United Kingdom

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *20 February 2020*
Accepted: *04 June 2020*
Published: *09 July 2020*

Citation:
Engward H and Goldspink S (2020) Working With Me: Revisiting the Tutorial as Academic Care. Front. Educ. 5:105. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00105

INTRODUCTION

The context of this paper is informed by an empirical study which explored the lived experience of adult distance learning (Goldspink, 2017). Using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009), the alumni from a specific part-time, undergraduate course voiced their distance learning stories via semi-structured telephone interviews. In orientation, IPA is encapsulated as inductive, interrogative, and idiographic approach (Smith, 2004). The intention is to generate novel ways of understanding pre-existing ways of thinking and doing, and to open fresh insights about how the phenomenon as it is actually experienced. To explore the data, initial descriptive analysis progressed toward abstract and detailed conceptual interpretations, whilst remaining grounded in the participants' words, thus revealing "the extraordinary in the ordinary, the strange in the commonplace; the hidden in the obvious" (McNamara, 2005, p. 697).

In the study, the participants detailed narrative accounts convey various notions of care, which resonated specifically within the academic tutorial. Despite never meeting their tutors in person during their course, their descriptions included "caring people"; "they (tutors) cared about us and the course" and feeling "cared for." The participant dialogue exposes a deeper understanding of the qualities pertaining to "caring" in the tutors' concern and attention as academic caregivers, but significantly, associated with empowerment because the perceived caring actions of their tutors did not remove or diminish the learner's own responsibility in their learning (Rogers, 1959).

It was at the person-to-person level that the participants perceived the tutors to be *with* their learning: *"they understood what it was all about for me*." In this way, academic care is directed to the experience of learning and what this may mean for the individual learner. The examples of academic care referred to by the participants are all the more interesting because the learner-tutor contact relied on modes of communication that were either voice-led (telephone/skype) or employed the written word (emails/discussion boards). Care is often perceived as parallel with physical presence and action, for example ensuring that the classroom environment is conducive for learning or in the arrangements for face-to-face tutorials. However, this study suggests that care is more than sharing the same physical space as each other, and it is from here our discussion begins. First, we start by discussing what the academic tutorial care might be, and we then consider this in relation to care using Heideggerian phenomenology.

THE ACADEMIC TUTORIAL

When asked about learning experiences as a tutee, the chances are that responses will vary from excellent to not so good, but rarely indifferent. Specific tutors may easily spring to mind, while others fade into the shadows of the past. The reasons and reactions about what worked and what did not work in the tutorial relationship will be contextually orientated and individual. Thus, the tutorial relationship has a powerful effect on the here and now learning experience as well as influencing future thinking and action: in short, the in-course experience is likely to have post-course impact. Indeed, the style and approach adopted by tutors may reflect elements of their own experience which they may or may not be aware of. The jumble of personal experience, professional knowledge and organizational requirements renders pinpointing what makes a good tutorial relationship tricky. No two learners (or tutors) are the same, no two learning contexts will ever be totally repeatable, so identifying the principles of what makes a tutorial relationship successful, rather than prescriptive method, is beneficial. Yet, despite the importance of the tutorial relationship, there is limited empirical consideration of the more subtle, intrinsic implications of the tutorial process (Yale, 2017). Indeed, as Walker (2018) points out, it is hard to find a unified definition of what tutoring is. This gap in evidence and lack of consensus is intriguing given UKs emphasis placed on tutorial support in relation to issues of competition, league tables, retention, widening participation and the consumerisation of education as wrapped within the *UK Teaching Excellence Framework* (Stenton, 2017; Thomas et al., 2017; O'Leary et al., 2019).

It may be that organizations respond to political and policy drivers by reviewing tutoring policies, guidance, governance and training, where the tutorial can be framed as an auditable activity, to show that tutoring is "done" and is reportable to a host of academic committees and overall, can be made publicly visible (Blackmore et al., 2016). However, focus on the externally visible and measurable activities misses the crucial point of tutoring: that learning is a highly personalized endeavor, often implicit, often recognized retrospectively, and largely, without quantification. This observation is important as the role of higher education has a dual remit; firstly, attainment in the here-and-now, and secondly to enable learners to manage and succeed in unknown futures. Therefore, we cannot fix our attention on the short-term targets without considering what happens after our students leave the university. Knowledge and people move on and develop, therefore tutorial concern is more than "getting students through" an educational system. Rather, we are empowering learners to become their own "*knowledge producers*" (Iversen et al., 2015, p. 1) in the present and longer term, adopting an on-going attitude for acquiring and evolving the skills to question, search, select, and analyse. In other words, the preparative function of the tutorial has important pedagogic implications for current understandings, and possible future understandings. The tutorial relationship inherently encompasses the past, present and future, and where the individual is in relation to the often slippery states between the known and the unknown (Land and Meyer, 2010). The question of what makes "good" tutorial therefore is unanswered.

The uncertainty triggered by the process of learning is unique for each individual and carries with it two interlinked factors; firstly that recollections of the embodied experiences may appear as long forgotten, and secondly, how we were made to feel during those tutorial interactions can transport us back to those precise moments via the affective residues of that experience. What we experience could fall on a spectrum of responses, ranging from positive, negative or indifferent, but significantly, our memories are bundled in with how we feel about a situation. However, when we as academics book in, or plan tutorials, it is easy to overlook the affective consequences of our tutorial intentions. This is not deliberate. When we add the student name(s) to our diary and do the tutorials, we are often thinking about the purpose of the tutorial from our own academic perspective, which may be the assignment work and the specific disciplinary content. We may forget what it is really like to be a tutee, resulting in a mismatch between our intention and the learner experience. Such division may be compounded because the tutorial as a concept and as a process is multifarious, resulting in tutoring guides which tend to steer us toward the practical tasks of the tutorial role. Yet, to get to grips with what contributes to "good" tutoring, the powerful psychoeducational consequences cannot be ignored (Goldspink, 2017), and as Fung (2017) stresses, we need to ask what we, as part of a university are ultimately aiming to achieve. This type of intrinsic consideration is necessary as the tutorial experience is not explicated by observable behaviors alone, because actions are "infused with intentions" (Pring, 2015, p. 117). Moving beyond the idiom of "tutorial as doing" enables new conversations about what underpins constructive tutor/learner interactions and as Giles (2011) points out, relationships in the educational experience are hard to avoid, however we view them. The pedagogic meanings held within tutorial relationships are idiosyncratic, they belong to the individual and will resonate in different ways. As a result, heightening the sensitivity of the tutor and tutee relationship matters because of the far-reaching consequences of the academic exchange. This is why we argue that the tutorial needs to be re-framed as a form of academic care, and our proposition is not purely theoretical, it has practical implications too.

PEDAGOGIC DEFINITIONS OF CARE

Care is a complex phenomenon. At a rudimentary level, the origins of the word refer to internal "trouble" or "grief" (Simpson and Weiner, 1989, p. 893–894) associated with mental suffering. However, in the literature, the theory of care connects the self, other people and things, in terms of practice, values, and personal disposition. An overarching explanation of care is offered by Fisher and Tronto (1990, p.40) as:

> "a species of activity that includes everything we do to maintain, contain, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (1990, p. 40).

However, Tronto (1994) later refined this view via four sub-elements that reflect phases, good intentions, or aims: (a) attentiveness; (b) responsibility; (c) competence and (d) responsiveness. Similarly, in an educational context, Noddings (2002, p.11) expresses the notion of ethical caring or *a care for* as; "a state of being in relation, characterized by receptivity, relatedness and engrossment" (2002, p. 11) and suggests that care is the backdrop for pedagogical activity.

In this paper, we accept that care is implicit within most pedagogical activity—most academics teach because they care about their subject, its disciplinary foundations and its potential applications. Mostly they want their students to understand their discipline, and to gain from this understanding, and hopefully to enjoy it. Our view is consistent with Nixon (2008) ideas about the moral cornerstones of academic work which include practice as relational, purposeful, and presupposes social connectivity. In this respect, academic care signifies that people and things matter to us on a range of cognitive and emotional levels. Yet, academic care conveys a number of dialectic struggles because care that enables independence can equally foster dependence. As such, academic care is often obscured within the curriculum, and we argue for a shift in the focus of academic care from that of tutor-led pedagogical intention to that of the lived interactions within the personal tutorial context. To conceptually revisit the tutorial as academic care, we ground the concept within phenomenology. However, before we can revisit the tutorial as academic care, we need to briefly point to why phenomenology is useful.

HEIDEGGERIAN LEXICON OF CARE

The central concern for the hermeneutic phenomenologist Heidegger (1927) involves the philosophical conundrum of the meaning of being. In Heideggerian terms, care is how we define the human self (Inwood, 2000) and is essential for our engagement with the world.

To explain his ideas, he used the term *Dasein*, which means "being-there" to refer to our experience of participation and involvement in the world. Conceptually, Heidegger (1927) took inspiration from a Danish philosopher, Kierkegaard, and his beliefs about concern and care, but where Kierkegaard recognized care or concern as psychologically subjective, Heidegger took an ontological view that care is the primordial structural entity, preceding and featuring in every aspect of our lived experience. As such, care reflects the self in terms of unity, authenticity, and entirety, or *Dasein*. However, Heidegger (1927) points out that the human self is inclined to become removed from its own authentic being by retreating into the crowd. Living in the wake of how other people think and act means that we allow ourselves to be led by, and unquestioningly follow taken-for-granted social expectations. Here, care (*Sorge*) is important because it beckons the self (*Dasein*) away from the other, and in its place, empowers authenticity. Hence, for Heidegger (1927), care is inherently linked to openness and a willingness to engage with future possibilities. In this respect, recognizing the self (*Dasein*) as care indicates that we understand ourselves-in-the-world by what we can and cannot do. *Dasein* decides itself, hence the meaning of its existence unfolds through all of our experience. Thus, the experience of higher education is not restricted to a particular time, place or person, instead it is interwoven within our being-in-the-world.

The findings in Goldspink (2017) research evidences the tutees transition from their acceptance of taken-for-granted assumptions to the consideration and construction of new, authentic insights about their previously held beliefs, which led to new was of being and interacting with others. Acknowledgment and questioning of prior understandings enable alternative perspectives to grow and flourish in the context of the individual, which engenders meaning and purpose. Involvement and ownership in the tutorial process gradually adjusted from content-based knowledge to self-based knowledge through five components of engagement: refocus, rethink, relate, review, and respond. These are presented in **Table 1** alongside verbatim examples from Goldspink's data. However, how the learner perceives the tutorial relationship will influence their investment in the tutorial relationship or as one participant said, *"the tutor is key."* The tutor can metaphorically unlock learning, but they can also inadvertently shut-down learning opportunities through their unchecked expectations and actions.

What is evident in the table is that there is a distinct shift between component 1 and 2, and 4 and 5. Here there is a shift from the outside world and "they" (the tutors) to the internal world of the "I," specifically; I own my learning and what I want to do with that learning. As the participants began to confidently and routinely question themselves and others (Baxter Magolda and King, 2012), their response to their learning enhanced

TABLE 1 | Five components of academic care and data examples.

Components of academic care	Examples from data
Refocus time and existing priorities to attend to the needs of the self	*"I give, and give and give…this was mine"*
	"I had to commit; a half job wouldn't work"
	"I decided to focus on my degree"
Rethink expectations of self, ability and opportunity	*"I did ask myself – can I really do this?"*
	"That person [the tutor] believed in me"
	"I never thought of myself as academic"
Relate to others and receive empathetic responses to validate and challenge new thinking	*"[The tutor] helped me to go beyond my usual thinking"*
	"I just felt supported by them, like this all mattered"
	"No question was ever silly to ask"
Review previous ways of feeling, thinking and doing because of a new relationship with learning and consistent curiosity	*"We learn so we can change"*
	"I feel much more confident, like its ok not to know"
	"I began to look forward to my study time"
Respond by using self-connected learning strategies based on autonomy and confidence	*"I can't go back"*
	"At work, I'm the guy who finds things out"
	"Oh, I'll ask those difficult questions now, they should be asked"

TABLE 2 | Modes of solicitude applied to the tutorial context.

Modes of solicitude	Examples of poor tutorial practice that creates dependency	Examples of good tutorial practice to enable independent learning
Indifference	Ignoring individuality	Working with the individual
	Content focused	Personalized communication
	Lack of availability	Consistent presence
Inauthentic	Agenda set by tutor	Enabling responsibility
	Telling and instructing	Building resilience and tolerance
	Finding easier/quicker options	Working with uncertainty
Authentic	Restricting exploration	Positively using mistakes
	Assuming ability	Providing feed forward
	Answer-led approach	Curiosity-led approaches

their autonomy, which continued post-course. The nurturing learning environment fortified individualized transformational processes, without the expectation of transformation to occur in any set frame.

However, when two of the participants struggled to connect with their tutors, they experienced feelings of frustration, confusion, and abandonment. Without feeling cared for, mutual respect diminished and learning facilitators become learning inhibitors: *"I don't think she [the tutor] got just how difficult it is when you're a distance learner and you don't get what you are supposed to be doing,"* and "*I was bottom of the list… he [the tutor] didn't fill me with much enthusiasm*." The situation returned the participants to previous ways of being and "wanting answers" rather than finding solutions for themselves. As such, we can identify factors that are both enhancing of, and limiting to, learner confidence and authenticity in their learning. The academic tutorial thus is a relationship of care, where good care can develop authentic learning, and where a poor care relationship, can stifle authentic and independent learning. To explore this further, we turn again to Heidegger.

DISCUSSION: ACADEMIC CARE AND TUTORIAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the context of higher education, Heideggarian philosophy emphasizes the experiential complexities and fluidities of the academic development/personal development nexus. To polarize academic development from personal development fails to recognize higher education as an integrated experience of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. In the Heideggerian tradition, the semantics of care derive from the Latin cura, meaning to be aware of, and compassionately attentive to, the self, people and things (Escudero, 2013). The translation includes being concerned and troubled as key components for growth. However, according to Heidegger (1927), our approaches to care are not static and change depending on the situation that we find ourselves in.

As such, Heidegger conceptualized care as solicitude, or an attitude to other human beings. He defined the three modes of solicitude: firstly, a mode of indifference, where the "being-there" of others is unnoticed or neglected; secondly, there is "inauthentic solicitude" which is the type of involvement that "leaps in" for the other and is characterized as a form of control, even though it may be well-meaning. In this instance, there is the likelihood of increasing unconstructive dependency because others surrender their struggle and even if they appear to be receiving help, their autonomy is taken from them. In this mode of caring, the other person's existential project in negated. In other words, by giving, we are actually taking their experiential prospects away from them. Alternatively, authentic solicitude assists others in taking responsibility and care for themselves. Heidegger (1927, p. 123) describes this as a "leaping ahead" of the other to liberate them to face their own "Being" and manage the burden of their own existence. Instead of taking over another's task, they are encouraged to do it in their own way and deal with the outcome for themselves. In doing so, the unique existential project of the other is preserved and respected.

Applying this to education, (see **Table 2**) effective academic care is conveyed through interactions that will inspire learners to autonomously connect to their own learning. Hence, the experience of academic care reveals human connections help people to grow by embracing their own curiosity (Riley, 2013).

A feature of academic care within the tutorial is to challenge taken-for-granted thinking. Academic care therefore is not a set strategy, but rather is an ethos that re-positions the learner as the architect of their lived experience. We see this as a joint commitment between the tutor and the learner, and it is the skill of the tutor to know how and when to support the individual learner so that they can gain the academic confidence to evolve from a reliance on others to a reliance on themselves.

However, gaining of academic confidence takes time. To go beyond our accepted frames of reference exposes us to the unknown and requires a level of courage. Learners must risk bewilderment, making mistakes or owning up to a lack of understanding, all of which are tied to taken-for-granted thinking and can hold us back from our own potential. However, to care is more than to support. It is also a way to advocate and demonstrate what it means to be curious, a way of being-there by actively experiencing the world in order to become oneself in the world. The transition from acceptance of the status quo to curiosity is regarded by Heidegger (1927) as an ontological necessity for human beings (Inwood, 2000). Heidegger (1927) did not believe that a person could be taught to think by another, because thinking is an experience of being-lost-in-thought. As soon as we attempt to instruct how thinking happens, we shift from in-thought toward an ontic method (i.e., describing the phenomena rather than the nature of the phenomena) which is not the same.

This Heideggerian view illustrates how self-induced thinking and inquisitiveness is more effective than a didactic exchange of knowledge for future impact. From this perspective, academic care compels a different type of tutorial conversation and approach. The tutorial relationship is based on learner reflections of their own academic strengths and needs to shape what is experienced and inspire deeper levels of personalized learning, with the aim of longer-term benefit and utility (Goldspink and Engward, 2018). As a result, the internalized learning that may have taken place is likely to be different to the learning that is assumed. Although external knowledge is more recognizable in the present, longer-term understanding becomes more available as curiosity enables "what ifs" to be explored, even if not acted upon. Conversely, passively living without care reduces the possibilities of what our world has to offer, limiting choice and personal potential.

It is within the space of uncertainty that "not knowing" can be redefined as a place for curiosity rather than something to be avoided, where learning is nurtured through opportunities to challenge, question and discover. The problem is knowing what that experience of ambiguity might mean for the learner, because for Heidegger (1927), the self is taken-for-granted and unquestioned. As Mezirow and Associates (2000) notes, people more often question outcomes when they are not expected or wanted. In other words, transformation is not about receiving information or "knowing more"; it is experienced in terms of how a person appraises new information and the impact of that information on themselves. Mälkki and Green (2014, p11) phrase this as putting knowing to "the test" (2014, p. 11), and Maiese (2017) argues that transformation occurs when changes occur in how we think, feel, and behave. Hence, deeper-level learning is recognizable when knowing the answers is superseded by curiosity, and as knowledge approaches the self, so self-connected learning unites the self with the world so that different viewpoints and possibilities come into view (Goldspink, 2017).

Revisiting the tutorial as academic care offers the opportunity to review both our assumptions as tutors and our pedagogic practice. In particular, the ideas surrounding academic care requires a review of both how and why tutors enter into dialogue with learners. Consideration is needed about the language of the tutorial and what the messages are intended to convey. The following questions are prompts to appraise tutorial interactions and to demonstrate that academic care may already be embedded within practice or can be adopted without major upheaval to the existing operational tutoring infrastructure within the university:

- How do I routinely greet students?/What message might this give?
- In what ways to I personalize the learning experience?
- How do I understand the meaning of this learning experience for the student?
- How does this learning connect with the students' previous learning experiences?
- In the students' view, what were the challenges/opportunities of this learning experience?
- Are there ways to find out and understand what the student gained from the learning experience—was it expected?
- What strategies can I use / develop to enable the student to manage and positively respond to uncertainty?
- What can the student take forward from this learning experience/what needs to change?
- How will the student translate their new knowledge/understanding outside of the university setting?
- How do I routinely end tutorial interactions?/What message might this give?

Remaining open to questioning routine tutorial practices ensures that the tutoring role does not become a mechanical, task-based process. Situating learners at the center of their learning experience allows them to view issues from different perspectives and gives access to alternative ways of thinking and acting.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we suggest that academic care unites academic and personal development by recognizing the personalized, psychoeducational nature of the learning experience. Our discussion establishes the experience of academic care as central to effective tutorial support which has long-lasting and far-reaching positive consequences. Connecting learning and the learner's life experiences is essential, and in particular between interaction and the continuing nature of experiences. In doing so, the learner is the main contributor to their own learning process and the learner's role is transformed and as a result, so is the tutor's. Learner choice, autonomy and accountability cultivates opportunities for meaningful and applicable pedagogy.

The notion of academic care encompasses growth, from both understanding and having an effect on the world around us, whilst also being affected and changed. Therefore, the purpose of academic care in the tutorial relationship is to inspire curiosity, leading to a deeper, and longer lasting, understanding of the self and the world around us. The role of the tutor is therefore directed to the unique needs of the learner, and the tutor's main aim is to work with the individual, assist them to gain confidence to question understandings and remain curious about the application of knowledge. Goldspink (2017) empirical work suggests that the achievement of personalized outcomes stems from a nurturing, self-connected experience, which encourages and empowers a new relationship to learning. The tutorial process is centrally positioned to enable learners to adapt to learning by the self, for the self. Supportive interactions that encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning will promote new ways of learning. Tutor attitudes and actions can facilitate inquisitiveness so that learners rediscover and remain curious in order for them to positively manage and use the experience of uncertainty to find their own innovative and creative solutions. Overall, the tutorial is a learning space which needs to acknowledge and respond to the physical, affective and cognitive reactions of learning. Establishing trusting tutorial relationships offers learners the opportunity to find and trust their inner voice which is essential when viewing personal development as a continuing, lived experience.

The focus of the findings presented here thus relate to the academic tutorial; however, we accept the difficulties of attempting to narrow educational interactions into neatly defined roles. Instead, we are suggesting a way to manage the complexity of educational interactions by revisiting the ethos of what we are aiming to achieve when we work with students. As such, the notion of academic care spans the definitional ambiguities of tutoring and offers potential insights that can inform routine practice. The intention is to actively think about how we work with students in order to maximize their learning experience without major disruption to current educational processes. In other words, it is not about finding more time to work with our students, rather it is about considering how we use the time that we have with them.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study referred to in this paper was carried out in full accordance with the recommendations of the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education, Research Ethics Committee, Anglia Ruskin University.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY
published: 09 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00099

Advising by Design: Co-creating Advising Services With Students for Their Success

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With global trends turning toward increased personalization and expectations of higher education, the question of how to design relevant and high-quality advising services at scale that support learning outcomes, improve the student experience, and enhance the acquisition of employability skills is a central challenge for many universities. The emergence of co-creation principles to better shape relevant solutions to engage students can also be applied to advising practice. This article explores the role of design thinking applied to advising at both the strategic and operational levels within one Australian university. With a holistic methodology, design thinking considers the needs of everyone in the system, delivering qualitative data that provides insights into behaviors and drivers that have implications for the ways in which advising services are defined, designed, and delivered. It suggests that advising practice and the process of Human Centered Design share methods that can be powerful in bridging the gap that many students perceive between the institutional offering and the student experience.

Keywords: academic advising, co-creation, design thinking, student services, student success

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *31 January 2020*
Accepted: *03 June 2020*
Published: *09 July 2020*

Citation:
Mann C (2020) Advising by Design: Co-creating Advising Services With Students for Their Success. Front. Educ. 5:99. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00099

INTRODUCTION

Advising students on curricular and co-curricular choices that support student success is increasingly recognized by educational policy makers as an integral component in enabling confident, capable, and critically-thinking learners who are ready for the world of work (Campbell and Nutt, 2008, p. 5; Kift et al., 2010, pp. 7–8; Young-Jones et al., 2013, p. 9). Yet engaging students in quality advising continues to be a shared challenge for higher education institutions across the globe. With many students struggling to connect within their disciplines, there is an even greater challenge to help them find connections outside the curriculum in ways that are increasingly personalized and individualized, whether it be with academic and professional staff, or their fellow students (Baik et al., 2019, pp. 683–684). Students are at the heart of what we do yet are often removed from the solutions we provide, sometimes resulting in a mismatch between expectations on both sides and a disjunction between support and experience, particularly for international students (Roberts and Dunworth, 2012, pp. 525–526) and students who require support to prevent early departure (Coates, 2014, p. 21). While universities recognize the importance of the student experience as a concept, how do we personalize it, apply it and scale it in the design of curriculum and services?

The emergence of co-creation principles to better shape relevant solutions to engage students can also be applied to advising theory and practice. Advising from student insights can be institutionally powerful in bridging the gap that many students perceive between the institutional offering and the student experience. This paper will examine some ways in which students create and influence the design of advising programs at one university in Australia. It suggests that the idea of employing a range of defined methodologies drawn from design thinking can bring new insights into how institutions address advising impact and new ways of partnering for student success. In doing so, it contributes to the growing body of literature on academic advising and personal tutoring, and the integral role this function plays in the student experience, student learning and engagement, and student success by increasing the understanding, empathy, and value of students' lived experiences and their view on what assists and supports them to succeed. In doing so, it draws parallels between individual advising practice and the application of Human Centered Design (HCD) principles in designing advising activities and interactions with students.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The "student experience" has been gaining ground at the forefront of higher education learning, teaching, and engagement strategies over the past two decades. With widening participation, the globalization of education, changes in learning and teaching practices, increased opportunities outside higher education, and students' multiple commitments, the totality of students' experience is under review, requiring universities to be more expansive in how they enable and negotiate student engagement both in and out of the classroom (McInnis, 2003, pp. 12–16). The student experience includes not just academic learning and engagement, but the non-academic experience as well as a range of cognitive, social, and emotional dimensions that contribute to student success (De Silva and Garnaut, 2011, p. 72; Picton et al., 2018, p. 1262). As well as encapsulating the whole person, a whole-of-institution, embedded and coordinated, or "third generation" approach to student success and retention is now considered essential, particularly in supporting the first year experience (Kift and Nelson, 2005, p. 226; Kift et al., 2010, p. 10; Nelson et al., 2012a,b, pp. 186–187; Kift, 2015, pp. 58–59) and a "whole-of-student-experience" approach for those students who are at risk of attrition or poor academic performance (Cox and Naylor, 2018). The Student Experience Survey administered by the Social Research Center is now a key tool in the measurement of quality indicators for learning and teaching in higher education in Australia at the national level. It is used to assess and rank institutions according to how students rate a range of aspects of their experience including their perceptions of the quality of teaching, their sense of belonging, learning resources, student support, and academic and employability skills (QILT, 2019, pp. 80–84). With the Australian student experience falling behind that of the US and UK (QILT, 2019, p. vi), tackling it requires a whole-of-institution approach with staff working across disciplinary and service boundaries to achieve measurable and improved outcomes for students.

Education and Advising in Australia

This is significant in the Australian advising context. As the student experience becomes more multi-faceted, there is an increasing need for advisers to be interlocutors between the rules, regulations, and requirements of the university and the individual personal, educational, and career goals students bring, develop, and change along their student journey. Students in the Australian higher education context generally choose a major from the beginning of their 3-year undergraduate degree, similarly to the UK. There is some flexibility in their selection of elective subjects, but the study tends to be focused on specific disciplines in contrast to the broader subject choice offered in the first 2 years of the US system. Most Australian universities offer professional degrees at the undergraduate level, meaning that many students will enter directly into areas like Medicine, Law, Engineering, and Teaching. The University of Melbourne reconfigured its curriculum in 2008 to broaden the base of its undergraduate degrees and introduce professional qualifications at the graduate level, providing a structure that US students may find more familiar. However, while more students may be exploratory at the beginning of their degree, the focus on the major requires many of them to specialize early, and many arrive with a clear goal in mind. In general, students are not assigned to an academic adviser or personal tutor to assist them in exploration of their course and career pathways. For most universities in Australia, there is no defined "academic adviser," although Melbourne has just introduced this role as part of a move toward creating better connections between undergraduate students and academic staff. Students are therefore required to be highly independent in their course and subject selection, proactively seeking assistance when needed. Without the personal tutor or academic adviser of the northern hemisphere contexts to anchor the student throughout their entire journey and remain a point of constant connection, students may need to navigate the profusion of rules, courses, subjects, and curriculum themselves or with the guidance and advice of a range of staff.

Compared to the long-standing advocacy for academic advising as teaching and learning advocated for by NACADA in the US (Drake, 2013, pp. 17–26; Wilcox, 2016), or the historical structures of personal tutoring offering a pathway for holistic, personalized support that is emergent in the UK (Lochtie et al., 2018, pp. 2–3), "academic advising" as a function is largely undefined in Australian higher education. Terms differ across institutions making it challenging to gain insights into different roles and responsibilities. "Academic" or "student" advice is provided by a range of academic and professional staff in different roles either formal or informal. With only one quarter of universities using academic staff in their formal advising models, much advising on curricular and co-curricular choices rests with professional staff, often in student services, and increasingly accessed through centralized service centers[1]. Specialist advice such as that offered by Academic Skills or Careers Services is still additional rather than embedded in nature, although several institutions—including Melbourne—are moving in this direction. Advisers working with special populations such as first year students, First in Family, students identifying as LGBTIQ, equity cohorts, students with a disability, Indigenous

[1] A 2019 desktop review of 41 universities in Australia revealed 17 have centralized student support, 12 decentralized, 4 have a shared service model, 1 has embedded advice, and 6 did not mention their support or advising structures. Unpublished.

and First Nations students, elite athletes, international students, and overseas students (largely on exchange), all provide critical support to students throughout their time at university. But students may only see an adviser once and have no single person assigned to them for the duration of their course who gets to know them across time or who can help them build a plan for the future that can be revisited and rethought as their own development and learning progresses. Partnership, then, between academic and professional staff in different advising roles is crucial to ensuring that the student experience is considered holistically and remains connected to the academic mission of the university, particularly for the foundational first year experience (Kift et al., 2010, p. 8).

Partnership between staff and students is another critical nexus increasingly influencing the student experience. The concept of elevating student participation to partnering or co-creating with students, of bringing their voices into the design of curriculum and support services, has been a developing body of literature over the past decade. Several studies have explored how to engage students as partners in the design of curriculum (Carey, 2013, p. 258) and interrogated the nature, level and reciprocity of their participation in projects with academic staff (Bovill, 2017, p. 2). Student voice has also been recognized in the design and delivery of student support services and its role in co-creating conditions for student success (Allen and Nichols, 2017, p. 126). Co-creation and the student voice can also be applied to the broader operational environment of the university (Varnham, 2018, p. 7) along with its wide applicability at different levels of the institution, including responding to strategic and operational imperatives (Bovill et al., 2016, p. 197). One way of ensuring that advising is conceptualized and delivered holistically in partnership with students is to involve students alongside staff in the co-design, co-development, and even co-delivery of advising interactions, experiences, and services.

DESIGN THINKING

An effective method for bringing student and staff voices together into institutional conversations, curriculum, and collaborations is through design thinking. This set of methods, thinking, and practice places people at the heart of decision making by using an empathy-based, creative, user-centered process of problem-solving (Goldman and Kabayadondo, 2017, p. 4; Karpen et al., 2017, pp. 390–391). Focused on seeking solutions through collaborative, experiential, and kinesthetic learning theories, it has its roots in practical, process-based problem-solving in manufacturing and engineering. Evolving into an embedded methodological approach to professional design, it has become an influencer in educational theory and practice in a range of settings through the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors (British Design Council, 2007, pp. 6–8; Davis and Littlejohn, 2017, p. 24; Goldman and Kabayadondo, 2017, pp. 4–6). More recently, design thinking has extended into the business, marketing, and management disciplines, with design-based methods and tools being applied in a range of customer experience and organizational settings through the lens of service design (Karpen et al., 2017, p. 393; Stickdorn et al., 2018, p. 22). The links between business and education to provoke creative, lateral and human-focused solutions to "sticky" problems is being lead especially in the US through the Stanford Design School and the influential IDEO studio, and in the UK with the British Design Council, encouraging design-based thinking in multidisciplinary centers of excellence in universities to harness creativity, science, and technology in the interests of economic growth (British Design Council, 2010, p. 2; Goldman and Kabayadondo, 2017, p. 9; Roth, 2017, p. xvii). A global move toward implementing the benefits and features of design thinking in the teaching and learning context has also had implications for how universities think about and address problems and opportunities related to the student experience more broadly. The process of design thinking and its application to services through service design provides a way to systematically and productively engage students as co-creators in designing, re-designing or improving services and learning experiences that they have defined, tested, and validated as relevant, engaging, and timely. In terms of partnership with students, service design goes beyond traditional student representation and stakeholder consultation methods, to instead provide human-centered solutions for all participants—students, staff, and stakeholders alike.

The concept of design thinking is starting to gain traction in some literature on student engagement, learner support, and student partnership. Arvanitakis and Hornsby's Citizen Scholar model, for example, includes one quadrant on design thinking with a focus on people-centered thinking, aesthetics, and ethical leadership (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2016, p. 18). Elisabeth Dunne references design thinking as a quadrant in her Four Modes of Student Engagement to provide a pedagogical focus for students as change agents who build ideas from the ground up (Dunne, 2016, Preface). Drawing on these models, Emily McIntosh has also outlined a range of skills students can acquire through design thinking when engaged in specific active-learning opportunities such as Peer Assisted Study Sessions where they consider the learner experience and welfare of other peers within their group (McIntosh, 2017, pp. 10–11). For faculty and staff engaged in student development and academic advising, the process and method of design thinking as described by Goldman and Kabayadondo is aimed at similar learning outcomes to those exemplified in good academic advising: "To develop mindset changes … commitment to action-oriented problem-solving, a sense of efficacy, and understanding that failure and persistence … are necessary and productive aspects of success" (Goldman and Kabayadondo, 2017, p. 3).

ADVISING BY DESIGN

The University of Melbourne has been using design thinking to co-create a range of services and programs with students through a series of projects touching all stages of the student lifecycle. Using a variety of methods, drawing on a range of tools, and producing a series of artifacts such as student journey maps, personas, stakeholder maps, and service blueprints

(Karpen et al., 2017, p. 385), the University is adopting a new approach to linking strategic direction with operational excellence by ensuring that the student voice infuses all parts of decision-making that affects students. From delivering new social and community spaces to administrative processes, from the first year experience to careers services, and from students experiencing academic failure to those engaged in leadership, the University has adopted Human-Centered Design (HCD) approaches to learning about student behavior and stakeholder needs, framing the critical question, iterating prototypes, and delivering benefits, or defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing (Goldman and Kabayadondo, 2017, pp. 3–4). The University has particularly adopted the Design Council's Double Diamond method for service design (British Design Council, 2015, p. 6). The first phase, Discover, frames initial questions and encourages empathy through deep listening: activities are designed to elicit uncensored insights into how the group feels and thinks about what they want and need in relation to a core problem. The second, Define, focuses on framing hypotheses and parameters based on the insights of the Discover phase. The third, Develop, provides an opportunity for fast collaboration, testing, ideation, and prototyping with a "no wrong answer" philosophy. The final stage, Deliver, is implementation and feedback: putting the service or product into practice or market, and reflecting and building on lessons learned (British Design Council, 2015, p. 7).

The International Onboarding Experience

One of the first advising and student support HCD projects the university engaged in was around improving the commencing international student onboarding journey in 2017. Just over 40% of the total student cohort is international at the University of Melbourne, with students entering each year from a range of countries. This project recognized what other research has demonstrated: that for many international students, their experience is still fragmented, misunderstood, isolated, and disassociated from the experience of domestic students (Burdett and Crossman, 2011, p. 57; Arkoudis et al., 2019, pp. 803, 807). Building on customer journey maps delineated with currently enrolled students who could reflect on their own start at university, the project identified onboarding—a period defined from accepting their offer to arrival—as a key stage in starting life as a university student and sought to understand what types of support students might need to improve and optimize their experience. Initial research into the ways students experienced onboarding led to the identification of four key touchpoints that students valued as key to this process: communications from the university, accommodation, their preparedness for tertiary learning, and their readiness for Melbourne (University of Melbourne, 2017). Each of these revealed a range of individual and shared insights that enabled facilitators to synthesize into core findings. Students described the complexity of communications, a lack of awareness of accommodation options, a heavy reliance on friends and peer channels for information, and wanting to be inspired and engaged in their course and subject selection beyond the administrative function. HCD-based interactive sessions were then run in which students were invited to generate solutions using service design tools such as story-boarding, post-it note ideation and drawing which invoked a range of potential areas for experimentation. Staff were also engaged in a series of discussions and workshops to discover what their experiences of delivering onboarding were which similarly revealed a fragmented, complex and sometimes overwhelming experience in which different staff across services and departments sought to understand the process, who was accountable for it, and how their individual role contributed to the whole.

By giving international students a dedicated space in which to articulate their experiences, the project team were able to build on the suggestions that students identified as critical to their experience: a unified set of communications outlining what was expected of them and when; information on what sort of accommodation there was in Melbourne; earlier access to course advice and especially advice from other students; and ways to prioritize aspects of their experience to feel readier, earlier. In addition, the overwhelming insight that students valued and desired peer advice more than any other and for all aspects of student life was critical. For staff, these student insights provided the opportunity to rethink and refresh an existing first year advising peer-to-peer program to address an acknowledged gap in providing transition programming for international students who arrive onshore very close to the start of semester. The refresh consisted of expanding an on campus peer advising program to a virtual platform so that offshore and interstate students could access it before they arrived on campus. This dedicated small group advising service targeted at these students was communicated through in-person pre-departure briefings in students' own countries so they were aware of it and then through official university communications throughout the onboarding period. International students could access the peer-led, small group, virtual advising service before they left home to learn from the experience of a later-year student, connect to their peers, ask questions about life, learning, and accommodation, and be reassured in their choices around subjects. Seventeen student peer advisers were trained in developmental advising techniques successfully using student personas developed through another HCD project. The service was run both in and out of hours to accommodate different time zones, and used a technology platform that enabled the peer adviser to facilitate up to 4 students in the conversation. Over 500 students took up this service with just under a quarter completing a survey providing feedback demonstrating that they valued the peer advice, felt reassured about coming to a new country and university, and that their questions were answered. The peer advisers also provided valuable feedback and suggestions for improvement, creating another loop for engagement, skills development and a broader understanding of the support available to students. Importantly, this proactive, individual, advising service prepared participating students for starting life, study, and university in Melbourne, enhancing their early transition, making connections with credible, knowledgeable later-year students, and validating the importance of engaging in interventions early to set up good habits and practices in students before classes start (Thomas, 2012, p. 15; Wood et al., 2016, p. 24). This initial investment in an extended activity was relatively simple and quick to do, provided further insights from students who both led and participated, and gives a baseline to further explore validity for another targeted cohort.

Supporting Student Performance

Another HCD project focused on the increasing numbers of students identified as at risk of poor academic progress. There is agreement across the sector and internationally that this is an area for focus, with students at risk of attrition and poor progress a key factor in student success and engagement literature, especially for those students from non-traditional backgrounds or identified equity groups (Coates, 2014, p. 21; Kift, 2015, pp. 51–52). The University has well-established formal processes for identifying and supporting Students At Risk (SAR) and this is one of the areas in which advising plays a key role. The developmental advising team at Melbourne provides holistic, personalized, and strengths-based advice to these students to support and guide them to a return to good standing. The framework and methods used are very like those used in HCD but applied in an individual setting: advisers first discover what the student's story is, using techniques to build empathy and deep understanding; they then ask the student to define the key moments which led to fail a number, or all, of their subjects. A range of options for academic recovery are developed with the student, including an action plan to document these, a priority rating from the student in terms of importance, and a timeframe for implementation. Most importantly, the advisers continue to work with students throughout the semester to understand what strategies students undertook, how they are feeling and doing in their studies and life at university, and discussing the moderation or development of a new plan.

The research project's initial hypothesis was intended to uncover why students found themselves to be at academic risk, the factors that led them to that point, and the possible range of supports they could identify to help them mitigate further failure. Over 80 students, academic staff from eight faculties, and 27 professional staff from centralized support services participated in design-led research. Students were invited to participate from three different groups: those who had failed and attended an advising appointment; those who failed and did not take up support; and students who were academically successful as a counterpoint to understand what made them so, and how they conceptualized and lived this experience of engagement and success. In the first 2 weeks of the project, the Discover phase, project staff observed SAR appointments, going on a "service safari" (British Design Council, 2015, p. 14), to learn what students revealed and identified about themselves and their perceived reasons for failure. In addition, "user shadowing" was implemented to more intimately understand how some students in the project experienced not just the university but how this part of their lives interacted with other parts (British Design Council, 2015, p. 15). As part of agreeing to participate in the project, students signed a consent form clearly outlining that their deidentified data would be used in the improvement of student services. Four students were shadowed in their homes which meant that they generously agreed to allow staff to visit them and show them how they lived and functioned on a daily basis. This non-judgemental step in the Discover phase built empathy and understanding of these students' complex lives and allowed for observational, contextual queries into their experience of university around work, life, activities, responsibilities, and support. For staff in the project, it was a potent reminder that, while our work is focused on students and the university, for students, failing a subject may be just one factor in a much more complicated set of stressors or situations. This holistic and intensely personal view was a critical step and quickly showed that focusing just on the point at which students failed was too narrow. The SAR process in isolation did not reveal the extent of students' experiences of the university, nor did it provide an understanding of the systemic factors that influence a student's experience, needs, or expectations (University of Melbourne, 2018). As a result, the project scope was redefined to ask the question: How do we effectively support student performance? This refreshed approach revealed that their experience is often complex, fragmented, isolating, inconsistent and variously localized in faculties, departments, and services; that help is provided too late, that services are not always trusted; and that there are many students who are simply too overwhelmed and underprepared for the rules, standards, culture, and pressure of the academic environment. Students bear the burden of navigating complex curriculum, different structures, and diverse staff and were coping with transitions across a range of domains, trying to change, and adapt each time they entered a new subject, a new course, and a new year level.

The project elicited some important results for better understanding a range of needs across groups. It revealed not only student ideas for how to engage them better to address issues of academic failure; it also revealed that many students calibrate failure in different ways, for example, getting 70% instead of 95%, are less emotionally resilient, have increased wellbeing needs across different cohorts, and may not be used to seeking support. These student insights are important in considering how to design end-to-end services that take account of students' individual and cohort needs, at different touchpoints along their journey. The HCD project has enabled the prioritization of a specific advising pilot initiative: an early alert intervention project with a large undergraduate subject in one faculty as a prototype, itself the start of another discovery process. This intervention consisted of a peer-to-peer advising program, using proactive, intrusive advising to reach out to identified students at two critical touchpoints in semester: once students had received feedback on their first assessment (Varney, 2013, pp. 147–148) and as they moved toward exam preparation. Later-year students with lived experience and knowledge of the subject content contacted identified students to discuss how they were going, their understanding of the subject, and strategies for improving their academic performance. While this prototype provided statistically significant improvements in those students who received proactive support, the strongest learning from the prototype was that the resourcing was too intensive and unlikely to offer scalability. Selecting, training, and supporting the student peers was the biggest part of the project. Peers themselves reported finding the advising challenging if students did not want to take their advice to improve their engagement with the subject or their marks. Multiplying this small prototype in one subject by hundreds of subjects is not viable. The outcomes from this discovery project have contributed to baseline data for the University to invest instead in a multi-pronged university-wide pilot project aimed at supporting student performance which focuses, not on peer-led, intensive and intrusive advising, but on building a sustainable model of advice that is feasible, scalable, and desirable, enabled by technology and using resources in a more effective way. Design thinking as a holistic model that considers the needs of everyone in the system means that the time spent on identifying the problem through developing empathy at the individual level, alongside the observational, contextual enquiry, revealed patterns that enabled a prototype solution to be tailored and tested before large amounts of time and money were invested in strategic projects.

EMBEDDING DESIGN THINKING

Design thinking is not just being used to examine systemic problems that affect advising or to identify areas for initial investment in new services; it is also being used to redesign at the existing service level. One of the principles of design thinking is its ability to be adopted and adapted by a range of people and teams. Both the British Design Council and Stanford d. school readily provide access to resources to empower people to facilitate their own design thinking workshops. A series of design-thinking boot camps initially run by consultants has grown into a dedicated professional Student Experience and Design team at the University, educating, enabling, and empowering staff across a range of strategic and operational areas to start to embed design-thinking in their own processes for change, ensuring that the student voice is a constant: not only redirecting and validating hypotheses, problem definitions, and generating solutions, but acting as a form of "sense checking" on institutional initiatives. This saturation of design thinking practice within the organization builds staff capability to run their own co-creation workshops with students, as well as provides a low-cost, fail fast way to assess desirability, viability, and feasibility.

Designing a Co-curricular Award

This "train-the-trainer" approach to enabling staff who work directly with students to employ design thinking methods and tools has opened opportunities for rethinking how to engage students across multi-curricular experiences. An important step change toward building the necessary conditions for a comprehensive and coordinated organizational approach to learning experiences is in igniting the intersections between the curriculum and co-curriculum (Kift et al., 2010, p. 8). For advisers who work with students on their co-curricular, citizenship, and employability skills, design thinking has offered a different range of options to try with students around how they would like their co-curricular activities to be recognized and rewarded. Students were invited through their student portal to attend a "Design your own student award" set of workshops. Over 400 students applied with 150 selected to participate from undergraduate/graduate, international/domestic, gender identity groupings, and a range of discipline areas. Four different workshops were run, two with students who had experience of an existing award and two with no experience of recognition programs. The conditions were set using low fidelity tools—brown paper, Sharpies and post-it notes—for students to empathize with each other, define their key objectives, ideate to generate the maximum number of ideas in the shortest amount of time, and build prototypes of their new award within small groups. After collaborating in these activities, students presented to invited staff and other students on their ideal award's rationale, features, and benefits, as well as the support they identified as essential to successfully completing it. Excitingly, the workshops engaged students in the whole double diamond process: asking them to discover, design, develop, and deliver prototype awards within a two hour timeframe and produced a series of awards to analyze and consider alongside institutional benchmarking and research to build a fuller picture of what drives student engagement in the co-curriculum and when, how, and what sort of advising students seek on experiences for employability outcomes.

Interestingly, the project's starting hypothesis had been that students would like a new award and preliminary discussions had focused on what that might be. However, students in the workshops used creative problem solving to demonstrate that they were satisfied with the current award structure. Those students who had no knowledge of the award designed the components that currently exist. There were also additions: clearer guidelines, ways to connect with each other, a ceremony and certificate, and a pathway toward other awards if they completed this one. Quick wins were the implementation of an annual awards ceremony and a certificate signed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). Medium term innovations were a new module in the Learning Management System to display more information for students, provide scaffolded content and clearer learning outcomes, institute a quiz to test knowledge and enable more student-led materials including evidence of engagement through mixed media. Future and longer-term goals are to develop broader partnerships across the University with providers of co-curricular opportunities for students, build an online social media presence, and drive a pipeline through to other engagement awards such as the New Colombo Plan Scholarship that build on the skills, aptitudes, and behaviors the students exhibit in this award. By working directly with students, we have been able to further enhance the existing award in ways that are relevant and responsive to students needs and wants. By learning from them, our assumptions going into the project were challenged and reframed, saving resources and minimizing risk, while engaging students in a high-impact activity that taught them new skills and built new peer connections.

Designing Your Student Experience

The challenge of addressing personalization at scale has also affected the developmental advising that Melbourne has delivered. Providing individual appointments to students is challenging and there is increasing need to deliver advising services differently and at scale. Understanding more about what students want from advising, whether they want individual or group, when they want it and what it covers is essential to designing and delivering a sustainable and relevant service. The developmental advising team led a set of "Design your student experience" HCD workshops with students with the objective of creating a space where students can map out their own journey, consider their academic program, and identify the skills, experiences, and support they need to achieve their goals. With the input and insights of their peers and using creation boards, journey mapping, human scales, prototyping, and other exercises, students produced their own personal plans that encompassed a range of activities they might want to access and participate in across the course of their degree. For many students, this started with a realization that there is more on offer than just their academic timetable so the workshop also served to illuminate opportunities for exploration covering how they might engage themselves academically, emotionally, spiritually, musically, environmentally, and socially. Students discovered study abroad opportunities, great places to eat, still places to sit, activities for sustainability, and other ways to feed their souls while at university. This holistic approach provides a way for students to consider their experience in totality, walk out with an artifact of their own, be creative with others, and put their views forward without judgement. They also have a plan of action but, importantly, with the process of iteration and prototyping, can hopefully see that it is subject to change and can be refined as their journey progresses. The benefits of design thinking were to enable staff to directly take the content and model of an individual advising appointment and test these in a new way of engaging groups of students that uses good developmental and motivational advising techniques but that could be scaled up, yet still creates opportunities for students to connect and personalize their experience.

At the individual level, using HCD to design advising programs and activities has some clear benefits. For advisers used to a holistic person-centered methodology that encourages change and development, reflection, and iteration, as well as action learning, the process of HCD may seem familiar. The methods of design thinking have many similarities to Appreciative Advising and its six stages of disarm, discover, dream, design, deliver, and don't settle (Bloom et al., 2013, pp. 85-8). The emphasis on seeking empathy, defining the problem, ideating or thinking of options, iteration or reflection on the process, building a solution, and testing it out make it a set of methods that can be easily adopted in group settings. In the context of advising and the student experience, this suggests that HCD can provide a sense of methodological legitimacy for institutions to engage more authentically and deeply with their students through co-creation and co-design, especially in considering issues presented by scale and personalization.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Design thinking is still a new methodology for the University of Melbourne. It is currently forming the basis of new ways of working—across silos in services, between the academic and support areas of the university, between strategy and operations. A new team is being resourced to support the organization and to work across boundaries, to provide access to and application of the student voice, and create empathy and understanding between different groups of staff and stakeholders. This approach is a step change toward embedding design thinking across the organization as part of a broader strategy to firstly, acknowledge and secondly, improve the student experience. These methods are still limited by our ability to have engaged students and especially those students who do not traditionally engage or for whom there are greater barriers to engagement. But once we can access them, as our Supporting Student Performance project demonstrated to us, the lived experience of students and their generosity in sharing insights brings untold value to not just the services we design, but the ways in which we expand our thinking around students and their interactions with us in the twenty-first century. It challenges us to listen in new ways and, for historically conservative institutions, to move away from the centuries of tradition and expertise, to be open to new voices and to recognize that to create a sense of belonging for students, we need to create ways in which their feelings are recognized and valued. This is an approach that has been central to advising practice in other contexts, and must continue to inform the ways we include, value, respect, and teach our students of the future.

CONCLUSION

High-quality advising and personal tutoring is starting to be acknowledged across the sector as a key to the student experience. Richard Light's foundational work in examining the role and impact of academic and professional staff advising in the US college setting has long held sway about the fundamental role advisors play in shaping the conditions for success, asking "What better way to honor our students, than to ask them about their college experiences? By taking what they say seriously, we can implement ideas that can help students succeed and prosper on our campuses." (Light, 2003). Design thinking challenges individuals to suspend their expert judgement and listen deeply and effectively to student voices, to lived experiences, and to learner insights. This requires leaders and practitioners to be open to ideas and thinking that may test their assumptions and hypotheses, and to reconsider what the student experience of their institution is, and how students want it to be. This is particularly potent for the emerging discipline of academic advising and personal tutoring which positions students at the center of their own educational, personal, and career journeys but which can struggle to find institutional traction in contexts where scale and volume are the primary measures of impact.

Design thinking provides a particularly rich way of engaging students in projects focused on supporting their academic, social, and emotional engagement and provides a way for the institution to take a more holistic approach to understanding and shaping their experience at scale and across the organization. The core principles of design thinking provide a critical lens through which to examine the student experience and the resources allocated to it through strategic and operational planning. Many HEIs are now turning their attention to the end-to-end student experience and how services and support functions work to "wrap around" the student's central learning experience. By using tools that elevate and engage with the student experience, institutions can better design advising interactions that are relevant, timely and feel personalized at scale to create conditions for student success in an educational environment that values, listens to and empowers student life, student voice and the student experience.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval was not required for the study on human participants in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CM authored the complete work, including drafting, writing, and revision.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS
published: 01 October 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.529628

Personalised Learning for the Student-Consumer

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This paper (written in British English) seeks to contribute to the development of personal tutoring as a key aspect of learner-centric pedagogy, in response to the changing profile of Higher Education (HE) students, especially in terms of the social and cultural capital which they bring with them, which shapes what and how they want to learn, and the marketisation of HE in the United Kingdom. It will challenge some of the prevailing views about student engagement, in order to contribute to the development of learning cultures which are relevant to the 21st century (McWilliam, 2010), and to enable personal tutoring to add value to the experience of *all* students, by explicitly recognising the diverse range of competencies and literacies which students bring to their studies, and enabling students to use these resources to co-create their learning experience. This requires the development of personal tutoring as a means of challenging the hidden curriculum, thereby enabling universities to adapt to students' needs (rather than, or as well as, requiring students to adapt to universities' expectations), through the recognition of personal tutoring as a specific area of academic expertise, and elevating its importance and its contribution to student success, and by enabling it to contribute to the development of *personalised learning* (not just providing *individualised support*). It will be argued that the development of effective personal tutoring, which reflects the diversity of C21st students, requires an approach which transcends the binary opposition between 'student as partner' (SaP) and 'student as consumer' (SaC), which creates a mono-cultural approach to student engagement, by recognising that students are active consumers, already engaged in the development of their own identities, and that the co-creation of their learning experience is one of the ways they do this. This would enable personal tutoring to play a central role in supporting all students to develop their own reflexivity, enabling them not only to pursue a professional career, (and enabling businesses to create a more diverse workforce), but to shape the future of the industries in which they will work.

Keywords: student engagement, inclusive practice, marketisation of higher education, hidden curriculum, co-creation

OPEN ACCESS

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *25 January 2020*
Accepted: *31 August 2020*
Published: *01 October 2020*

Citation:
Partington A (2020) Personalised Learning for the Student-Consumer. Front. Educ. 5:529628. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.529628

INTRODUCTION

This paper will argue that students must be understood as student-consumers who will drive much-needed innovation in Higher Education (HE), including the development of personal tutoring as a means of enabling and empowering students to shape their own learning, and thereby transforming HE learning cultures to meet the needs of twenty first century (C21st) students.

This would involve enhancing the value of personal tutoring in two ways. Firstly, by enabling personal tutoring to be of benefit to *all* HE students, regardless of their previous educational experience and/or the kinds of cultural capital they bring with them, and, secondly, as a means of gathering market intelligence, (i.e., knowing and understanding C21st students), which will drive the development of inclusive practice generally. Personal tutoring has huge potential *both* as an area of activity within which innovative practice can develop, *and* in enabling innovation in other areas of learning and teaching, by facilitating a pluralised approach to student engagement, and thereby enabling co-creation of the curriculum.

Persistent attainment gaps, and students' less than satisfactory experience of academic support (as measured through the National Student Survey), are evidence that personal tutoring is currently failing to add value to the experience of most students, and like many other schemes and frameworks in HE, it can be seen as an example of the 'well-meaning but vague actions which are unlikely to effect change' (Dale-Rivas, 2019, p. 9).

It can be argued that this is because prevailing views about student engagement are preventing change in HE, because they privilege particular ways of learning above others, and promote a mono-cultural approach based on an insistence that the student is not a 'consumer' but a 'partner.' This approach allows only students with already-legitimised cultural capital to actively engage, while alienating students whose already-acquired competencies and literacies are not valued, and do not enable them to engage in the particular ways expected of a 'partner,' where learning is 'personalised' only for students who behave in predictable and acceptable ways. A recognition that students *are* consumers, and an understanding of learner-consumers as highly differentiated and discriminating, would enable the development of a pluralised approach to student engagement, and of personalised learning for *all* students.

Personal tutoring has become increasingly important in HE, as universities seek to develop competitive strategies in response to a number of pressing challenges which increasingly face the HE sector in the United Kingdom (Group for Learning in Art and Design, 2008; Moran and Powell, 2018), which include the creation of a market economy and the changing demographics of its markets.

Some of these strategies are focused on 'selling' what is already offered (e.g., investment in advertising, re-designed websites, and statement buildings), and by highlighting certain aspects of the offer (such as personal tutoring) as 'selling points.' But in order to maintain competitiveness, it is important to understand that 'selling' is not 'marketing' (Brown, 1995), and to implement *marketing* strategies which *develop* our offer, in response to needs of *all* C21st students.

This would require an understanding of student engagement as a means by which individual students co-create their own learning, through practices of meaning-making which actively support personal development and self-transformation, investment in staff development to promote this understanding, and the provision of resources to develop and deliver personal tutoring which is properly student-centered (not just an offer of 'contact' and 'support').

Leadership in HE requires the capacity to recognise the challenge of marketisation as an opportunity to transform our approach to student engagement and personalised learning, from a singular ethos which promotes particular ways of learning, to the recognition of student and staff practices which support diverse and multiple learning styles.

Demographic data tells us that students are more diverse than ever, not only in terms of socio-economic class and ethnicity, but also in terms of 'lifestyle' preferences and cultural identities (UUK, 2018), and in terms of the range of motivations for further study, and the range of expectations of HE. Understanding and valuing these motivations and expectations will allow us to co-create learning experiences which reflect the values of diverse consumer groups, (i.e., to become more inclusive), and to promote diversity as a way of providing choice, through a pluralised approach to learning and teaching; in short, to become properly market-led, (in contrast with the established subject-based research-led approach to curriculum development, which has largely failed to drive innovation in learning and teaching). This requires the development of a new approach to student engagement and personalised learning which recognises the value of diverse sets of knowledges and competences which students have already acquired, and accommodates a far wider range of learning styles. In this context, effective personal tutoring depends on the extent to which the individual student is understood as a 'learner-consumer' (see below).

Across the sector, there is a lack of a shared definition of the role of the personal tutor (Lochtie et al., 2018), and it has been seen to meet a wide range of students' needs, including: being 'an "anchor" for student support systems' (Yale, 2019, p. 534), and providing 'information about... processes, procedures, and expectations, personal and pastoral support, and referral to other sources of information and support....to foster a sense of belonging and integration (*sic*) into university life. ...(and),... embodies the (*sic*) student relationship with the university' (ibid.) These definitions raise a number of questions, however, about how 'if the university has become more *inclusive* (author's emphasis), to what extent have institutions changed to accommodate, to manage this inclusive student expectation?' (Stephens et al., 2008, p. 451). While 'integration' implies that personal tutors should help students to adapt to 'university life,' a 'sense of belonging' suggests that personal tutoring should somehow facilitate shared values between the university and the student.

As access to HE has widened significantly over the past few decades, a crisis in personal tutoring has emerged, because it has enabled entry to first generation students whose expectations are very different from students who already have the benefit of their parents' knowledge of university life: expectations which, when not met, create stress and anxiety for them, presenting personal tutors with the increasingly challenging problem of how to foster 'integration' into 'university life' for these students, and creating a 'gulf between inclusive policy intentions...and the lived experiences of students and staff' (ibid, p. 449). This crisis is due to the persistence of a 'deficit model' approach to personal tutoring which propagates an underlying belief that students need to be 'fixed,' rather than fixing the learning culture that they are being expected to adapt to. It also exemplifies the 'troubling paradox of widening access...(which) is that, despite the democratic intentions, (it) has brought an intensification of class and racial inequalities' [Reay, quoted in Speirs (2020), p. 134].

Widening *access* to HE does not in itself enable the development of inclusive practices in learning and teaching, which would enable widening 'participation.' Diversity and inclusion are not the same thing, (Sen, 2019): inclusion is the *explicit* recognition of diversity as a *strength*, and as a (potential) driver of creativity and innovation (Leadbeater, 2008; Shirky, 2008). But the increased diversity of students needs have so far been viewed as a 'problem,' rather than as a potential driver of innovation in HE; and has triggered a 'collective moral panic' (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 12) within HE. These new markets have been stereotyped as 'snowflakes' and 'careerists,' who prioritise value-for-money above the 'love of learning,' rather than being recognised as sophisticated and discriminating consumers who choose their brand loyalties, (i.e., 'sense of belonging'), even more carefully than previous generations (Giammona et al., 2019). This is because they do not conform to the 'ideal' student who would enable HE to continue to deliver the same curricula in the same way, and who is easily 'integrated' into 'university life,' rather than developing innovative approaches to learning and teaching, and especially personal tutoring, which would involve the transformation of 'university life' in response to these students' increasingly diverse and changing needs and expectations. This requires an understanding of the ways students actively engage through a wide range of learning styles and modes of interaction, and by recognising that students' motivations for study (including enhancing their career prospects) are not incompatible with a 'love of learning'; indeed they are mutually supportive.

Understanding and valuing students' motivations and expectations, (rather than seeing them as a problem to be solved), would allow the co-creation of learning experiences which reflect the values of diverse consumer groups (i.e., to become more inclusive), and to promote diversity as a way of providing choice through a pluralised approach to learning and teaching. But advice for personal tutors tends to focus on understanding diverse student populations in terms of more or less 'at risk' groups, and on offering a kind of ongoing 'induction' for students, rather than on diversity in terms of positive and valuable differences.

As an aspect of inclusive practice, personal tutoring is not only, or even primarily, about fulfilling the expectations of the role as described above, or even helping students understand their assessment feedback (Thomas, 2017), because, as useful as these things are, without also providing opportunities for the students' strengths and aspirations to be explicitly recognised and valued, these activities might simply re-enforce a deficit model, where an assumed lack of competence is being addressed, and become increasingly 'therapeutic' (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008).

The potential value of personal tutors is to enable the universities to *know* their students, (i.e., to know what they bring, what they want to learn, and how they want to learn), and to use this knowledge to drive innovation in learning and teaching, and *change* 'university life,' (rather than expecting all students to 'integrate' with what already exists), and enabling all students to benefit from personalised learning. This requires HE leaders to promote a strong interdisciplinary staff-development ethos, to invest in the development of personal tutoring skills, and to enable advancement through reward and recognition, by elevating the importance of the role and its contribution to student success, and to meeting institutional key performance indicator (KPI) targets. Personal tutoring needs to be recognised and valued as an area of specialist professional expertise, and personal tutors need to be recruited and developed in the same way as other recognised areas of academic specialism. The publication of guides and handbooks for personal tutors (Stork and Walker, 2015; Lochtie et al., 2018) is a promising sign that some universities recognise its increasing importance, but this needs to be accompanied by incentives, support, and forms of recognition, for staff to be able to pursue personal tutoring as an area of specialist professional development.

The discussion which follows is informed by research from across a range of areas including pedagogical theory (Biggs, 1996), theories of taste, consumption and identity (Bourdieu, 1984; Miller, 1995; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1996), and debates about innovation in HE (Willis and Gregory, 2016). The broader context for the discussion relates to questions of how institutional cultures impact negatively on the attainment and outcomes of students from under-represented groups (Amos and Doku, 2019; Dale-Rivas, 2019), which are already being addressed through ongoing research, such as recent work on the hidden curriculum (Hinchcliffe, 2020).

The discussion will start by challenging the negative connotations of the notion of the 'student as consumer (SaC),' and by arguing that students use the competences which they have already acquired as consumers, to engage in learning activities as a way of developing their own identities. It will then focus on the hidden curriculum, which prevents already-disadvantaged students from using these competencies to develop their own reflexivity, by prioritising some forms of learning above others, and privileging some forms of cultural capital above others, consequently creating barriers to personalised learning, and exacerbating inequalities. It will be argued that the hidden curriculum is sustained by binary thinking which underpins a spurious distinction between student-as-consumer and student-as-partner, and a mono-cultural approach to student engagement which prevents the competencies and literacies of most learner-consumers from being valued, and is therefore completely at odds with the notion of personalised learning. The discussion will conclude by arguing that personal tutoring has a key role to play in enabling universities to value students as consumers whose changing values, attitudes, and literacies, will drive innovation in HE by enabling universities to accommodate and encourage increasingly pluralised ways of learning, rather than clinging to a culturally conservative belief in value-free learning which serves only to reproduce the values of the white intelligentsia.

THE STUDENT-CONSUMER AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY

To understand and value the student-consumer is to focus on the 'centrality of the learner' (Biggs, 1996, p. 348), and on how students engage with learning experiences as a range of commodities through which they invest their already-acquired cultural capital, in the ongoing transformation of their own identities.

'The learner brings an accumulation of assumptions, motives, intentions, and previous knowledge that envelopes every teaching/learning situation and determines the course and quality of the learning that may take place. . . .[And] 'what the student does is actually more important in determining what is learned than what the teacher does,' and the teacher's role is primarily to adopt 'a focal awareness of *the learner and the learner's world*' (Biggs, 1996, pp.348–349, author's emphasis).

The students' previous knowledge includes that which has been acquired through complex interactions with a wide range of commodities, yet the term 'student-as-consumer' is routinely used as one of a number of ways in which C21st students are described in pejorative terms, and stereotyped as having 'consumerist attitudes' (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 12), in contrast with mythical 'traditional students' who are equipped with legitimised cultural capital and motivated only by a 'love of learning.'

But consumers are not passive recipients of good and services; they are active participants in their production, and have always driven innovation in industry. Consumption is the active ('creative') production of socio-cultural distinctions, rather than a passive reflection of distinctions which already exist, and is therefore the 'vanguard of history' (Miller, 1995).

Consumption is always necessarily creative, i.e., selective, eclectic and, above all, *unpredictable.* It is this unpredictability which explains why reflexivity is so highly valued in the creative industries, because "no one knows" (Caves, 2005, p. 5) what new forms and practices consumers are going to develop. Brand-owners are increasingly conscious of how discriminating and sophisticated consumers are, in their expectations that the brand must match their changing values (see Noble, 2018), and this is the 'sense of belonging' (which personal tutoring is expected to nurture) through which industry enables consumers to become the co-creators of their products, which they use in the ongoing transformation of identities.

It has become accepted amongst cultural theorists that identity is always 'in production,' fluid and complex rather than fixed, or determined by socio-economic circumstances. Identities are performative; 'temporary attachments to subject positions constructed through discursive practices' (Hall, 1996, p. 6). Identities are developed not in a relation of absolute distinction from others, but through parodic copying/emulation and appropriation which creates hybridisation. This cultural 'promiscuity' drives the production of newness and difference, and testifies to the 'instability and mutability of identities, which are always unfinished, always being remade' (Gilroy, 1993, p. ix).

Consumer culture is increasingly fragmented into highly differentiated 'taste cultures' whose 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1984) articulates the social position of participants. But 'taste' is not the *expression* of an already-formed identity, because, as has already been acknowledged, identities are performative, never 'formed' but always 'in production.' The exercise of taste, and therefore the experience of enjoyment (including the 'love of learning'), drives the *transformative production* of identities.

As consumers, students engage with learning experiences as a range of commodities through which they invest cultural capital in the transformation of their own identities, and consequently in the development of a global knowledge economy. For example, the graduates of British art schools have arguably driven the success of United Kingdom creative industries during the last 60 years.

It is often assumed that this success is the result of the particular approach to learning and teaching adopted in British art schools, which is practice-based and, supposedly, student-centred. However, it can be argued that this success is not due primarily to a particular pedagogical approach, but to the participation of 'first generation' working-class students, which increased the diversity of the student population. This reflected the impact of post-World War Two multiculturalism and social mobility, brought about by the Education Act of 1944, which provided opportunities for working-class children, even though the proportion of working-class students in HE remained relatively small until more recently.

This success was due to the practices involved in using the knowledges and competences which these students had already acquired as consumers of 'popular culture,' enabling the products of the creative industries, in which they went on to work, to become much more highly differentiated, reflecting the changing tastes and preferences of more diverse social groups. These students became successful professionals because they became cultural intermediaries, enabling differentiated consumer groups to participate in the development of contemporary culture, as new markets whose tastes and preferences had to be recognised and appealed to, and therefore driving innovation in the creative industries. And it is now widely accepted that the success of the creative industries depends on the diversity of their workforce (Easton, 2015), because creative practice is highly context-dependent, and driven by the diversity of its participants (Negus and Pickering, 2004).

This success was due not to the mere fact that working-class children were given 'access' to HE, but to the ability of these first generation students to 'participate' in new and different ways, by being allowed to use their consumer competences and literacies to develop their own reflexivity. However, as access to HE has subsequently widened further, the ability to participate has, for first generation students, been stifled by the persistence of the hidden curriculum.

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

There are many ways in which the hidden curriculum exacerbates inequalities, as has already been widely acknowledged (Hinchcliffe, 2020); it will be focused on here as a barrier to personalised learning.

Education is one of the means by which social and cultural hierarchies are reproduced within a capitalist economy (see Bourdieu, 1984), so widening access to HE does not in itself lead to the development of inclusive practices in learning and teaching. Education is only a means of promoting equality to the extent that it fosters reflexivity, i.e., enables individual students to develop their own capacity to recognize the forces of socialisation and to consciously change their thinking and behaviour, through *shaping their own* norms, tastes, politics, and desires. This is completely at odds with an understanding of personal tutoring as an exercise in 'integration' and 'educational socialisation' (Stephens et al., 2008, p. 450).

One of the competitive strategies being adopted by universities is the development of learning experiences which not only equip students with the skills to compete in the job market, but with 'graduate attributes' (such as creativity) which will enable them to *lead and shape* the future of the industries they will work in, and of the new socio-cultural spaces they will create. Vision and Mission statements often include an aspiration to equip students with the ability to *shape* society, as well as to contribute to the economy.

In order to achieve this, universities have to be able to foster students' reflexivity, which means allowing them to *shape their own* norms, tastes, politics, and desires. But simply having a 'personal' tutor (however, attentive the personal tutor is) does not in itself provide the student with the opportunity to develop reflexivity, and certainly not if personal tutoring is understood as a means of 'integration' and 'educational socialization.' Indeed, having a personal tutor often becomes yet another way of identifying the student's lack of 'engagement,' if the student chooses not to meet with their personal tutor, and merely supports the production of 'generic learners according to a particular vision of student success' (Hayes, 2018, p. 19), which treats students not as partners, or even as consumers, but as 'contractors from whom commitment must be "secured" (ibid., p. 30).

Effective personal tutoring would enable HE to foster students' reflexivity by explicitly recognising and valuing whatever cultural capital (whether legitimised or not) they bring with them, focusing directly on students' individual aspirations, and supporting the development of diverse learning styles. But this requires a willingness to address the persistence of the hidden curriculum which continues to ensure that some forms of cultural capital are privileged above others, even when the 'visible' curriculum appears to be inclusive.

The hidden curriculum is learned through a range of informal social interactions, and is sustained by a number of unquestioned assumptions about 'participation' which, far from being student-centred, inform a culturally specific pedagogy, thereby disadvantaging students who choose not participate in particular ways, or who are already disadvantaged by being first-generation students. The hidden curriculum works in the favour of students whose parents can help them navigate the social subtleties of university life, and who are more likely to fit the description of the 'traditional student.'

For example, the art school 'habitus' (Burke and McManus, 2009; Bhagat and O'Neil, 2011; Orr and Bloxham, 2013) is sustained by a 'studio culture' which depends on a visibly 'participatory' environment which, it is assumed, enables 'active' learning, in contrast with more solitary and/or cerebral activities (such as 'working at home' and/or engaging with the world via the internet), which are assumed to be 'passive.' But this is not made explicit or visible, either in course documents or student-facing information, including assessment criteria, and research has shown that art school tutors often make judgements about students, (not just their work), when marking and giving feedback (Orr, 2010; Orr and Bloxham, 2013).

Underpinning these assumptions about 'participation' is a binary 'active v passive' opposition which seeks to privilege some ways of learning above others, and fails to appreciate the wide range of learning styles which different students might prefer, or might adopt in different situations (For example, commuter students are more likely to prioritise attendance at timetabled lectures, rather than peer-learning activities, and to maintain social interactions within their local community rather that creating new social networks which are campus-based). The 'active v passive' opposition fails to acknowledge that reading, viewing, thinking, and using social media, or engaging with a local community, are just as active (and 'interactive') as the learning activities which involve visible 'participation' in a particular 'community of practice' (Wenger, 1998). Worse, it marginalises and alienates those learners who do not conform to acceptable forms of student behaviour which are recognised as evidence of 'engagement.' It also prevents the socio-cultural competences which students might continue to develop outside University from being recognised as a legitimate form of learning. These consequences in themselves then generate some of the anxieties which personal tutors are faced with, positioning them as pastoral counsellors (see Austerlitz, 2008), rather than as enablers of reflexivity.

It can be argued that there is no such thing as 'passive learning,' and that the use of this term is an example of how C21st students 'tend to be labelled as lacking in academic integrity' (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 3) and 'not adopting the right attitude to study' (ibid.). Students want to be 'taught' (as well as to learn) because they already know that a good teacher will inspire and motivate them, and as consumers they (not unreasonably) also see this as 'value for money.' (And, not surprisingly, students from underprivileged backgrounds are more concerned with value-for money than their more wealthy counterparts are). But students' perception of value-for-money is primarily about the *quality* of teaching, as well the likelihood that the course will enable them to get a well-paid job, in contrast with academics' assumptions that it is primarily about class size and contact hours (Neves and Hillman, 2019), and an expression of 'consumerist attitudes' and an 'instrumental approach to learning' (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 12).

The effectiveness of personal tutoring is, from the students' perspective, 'to do with the quality of the relationship and genuine feelings of connectedness' (Yale, 2019, p. 543) engendered through 'a two-way relationship based on mutual respect and shared responsibility, whereby the availability and purpose of the meeting are seen as negotiated and a joint endeavour' (ibid., p. 542). This requires the tutor to actively take an interest in the *student*, as an *asset* to the university, and to use their expertise to provide personalised advice which will enable the student to achieve their own ambitions and fulfil their potential, rather than simply responding to whatever 'problems' the student presents by enabling them to become better-integrated, i.e., more like the 'traditional' student which is a completely 'outmoded representation of the diverse contemporary body of learners' (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 2).

To summarise, the hidden curriculum is underpinned by binary thinking which sustains hierarchies and exacerbates inequalities, which then become part of the 'problem' which personal tutors are confronted with. This same binary thinking prevents many forms of engagement from being recognised, not only as valid or meaningful, but as enablers of *personalised* learning.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONALISED LEARNING

As already acknowledged, personal tutoring encompasses a wide range of expectations, and it is also interpreted differently across the sector, but is commonly understood as a means of providing holistic *individualised support* to students, and 'personalised learning' tends to be understood as something which is enabled by personal tutor's 'close attention' (Lochtie et al., 2018, p. 75), rather than something which should be enabled by the whole curriculum. In practice, this 'close attention' is often reduced to a means of helping to ensure 'student engagement,' and in debates about student engagement, the concept of 'student as partner' (SaP) is commonly used in opposition (and in preference) to the concept of '.' But it can be argued that this is a spurious distinction which privileges some ways of learning above others, fails to value the cultural competencies and literacies which all students bring with them, and to appreciate the wide range of learning styles which different students might prefer, or might adopt in different situations, and therefore marginalises and alienates learners who do not conform to acceptable forms of student behaviour which are recognised as evidence of 'active' engagement, and is therefore at odds with an individualised approach, to enable personalised learning.

The binary opposition ('active' vs. 'passive') underpins prevailing approaches to student engagement, which need to be challenged if we are to succeed in delivering on the aspirations articulated in Vision and Mission statements, to equip students with graduate attributes such as creativity. Student engagement is 'the process whereby institutions and sector bodies make deliberate attempts to involve and *empower* students in the process of shaping the learning experience' (HEFCE, 2008, p. 8, author's emphasis). British universities have invested heavily in ways to capture the student voice, and to measure their levels of engagement with their studies, and in using the data to drive change. This data tells us a lot, and especially that *not all students are the same*, e.g., survey data tells us that those students from low participation groups are less satisfied with their courses than those from more privileged backgrounds (Warwick Economics and Development, 2018). However, the relative lack of effectiveness of this investment, as indicated by National Student Survey (NSS) data, so far, suggests that we are not hearing what students are telling us (Meadows et al., 2016), because the established mono-cultural approach to student engagement is preventing us from hearing the increasingly diverse student voice.

Student engagement is commonly understood to be a singular range of particular and predictable activities (measured by data gathered through check-in systems, virtual learning environment (VLE) and library usage, etc.) which are defined by the institution, rather than a multiple range of diverse and unpredictable activities which are defined by students' own choices and preferences. Students are expected to 'engage' by making use of what is offered, and this 'engagement' is measured by the extent to which they do or do not do this, rather than by the extent to which their tutors enable them to develop their reflexivity, and the extent to which the university enables personal tutors to do this, by investing in staff and developing effective tutoring skills. To 'embed a culture of student engagement' (see Hayes, 2018), which otherwise exists only as an aspiration in vision and mission (VMS) statements and policy documents, the notion of student engagement, as a means of 'empowering' students, needs re-thinking.

The distinction between 'SaP' and 'SaC,' is based on the assumption that approaching students as consumers is somehow associated with a lower academic performance, whereas approaching students as partners enhances their learning (Senior et al., 2017; Curran, 2018). But this is another of aspect of the 'myth' about C21st university students having 'consumerist attitudes' and an 'instrumental approach to learning,' which is not supported by any evidence (Macfarlane, 2020).

Moreover, there are a number of problems with the concept of 'students-as-partner,' including the issue of how to reconcile the power relations between students and staff, to enable equal 'partnership.' Students' awareness of the power relations between themselves and their tutors helps to explain why the experience of receiving feedback is perceived by them as de-motivating and unfair. Research also shows that, far from being supported and enabled, students often feel disempowered by feedback from tutors, which they see as reflecting the values of the tutor (see Blair, 2007; Winstone et al., 2017), rather than a recognition of the student's own values and ambitions. Personal tutors are often the same staff who are tutoring the same students on specific modules and assignments, requiring them to adopt a somehow objective or neutral position which is at odds with their subject-based tutoring, and requiring students to somehow forget that their personal tutor is likely to be marking their work.

This issue has been responded to by, for example, providing 'unconscious bias training,' and by 'recognising the importance of personal growth for both staff and students' (Curran, 2018), i.e., that both are learners in the partnership, but it has also been responded to in a largely dismissive way, by simply rejecting the 'customer-provider' model of HE and what is perceived to be a 'dominant SaC ideology' (ibid.). However, it can be argued that simply acknowledging that both staff and students are learner in the partnership, and providing unconscious bias training, does not reconcile the power relations between students and staff: indeed these can be ways of simply masking them.

This distinction between SaC and SaP is a spurious one which fails to value the cultural competencies and literacies which students brings with them *as consumers*, and fails to acknowledge the centrality of meaning-making – creating and interacting with diverse forms of representation – to student practices.

As previously mentioned, consumers engage in the transformative production of their identities through the exercise of taste, and we know that students achieve more when they enjoy learning. Therefore, students' enjoyment, rather than the extent to which they participate in particular activities, would be a more meaningful way to measure their 'engagement.' Pleasure and enjoyment are not inherent features of experiences, but the effects of experiences which provide opportunities to use socially specific skills and competences (cultural capital) which have already been acquired, in the ongoing transformation of self-identity (through reflexivity and cultural promiscuity). Students have their own criteria for assessing the value of learning experiences, which is often completely at odds with the values of staff, e.g., lectures rated highly by peer observers are not necessarily rated highly by students, who expect lectures to 'add value' to material which could be accessed elsewhere (Smailes, 2018), which explains why students often choose not to attend (Kashif and Basharat, 2014), and the amount of time which students choose to spend on assessments is determined not by the weightings given by academics but by their own tastes and preferences (Attenborough et al., 2018, p. 16). Furthermore, students' perceptions of their own development are partly through their engagement with non-study activities (Neves and Stoakes, 2018).

Generation Z are proving to be the most discriminating and sophisticated consumers yet to enter HE. 'Students (now) have high expectations of their university experience and what it can offer them in order to improve their lives. Diversity across the sector indicates that there is no one "student experience": rather individual students have their own experience. It is therefore our responsibility to provide our students access to . . .opportunities. Which will transform their lives' (Shelton, 2018, p. 7). And research (see Yorke and Longden, 2008) shows that there is no one single element of the student experience that can be controlled to enhance satisfaction. 'The (*sic*) student experience' is not 'something generic that can be 'delivered' (Hayes and Jandric, 2018, p. 133) by universities; it is produced by students themselves, in diverse, creative, and unpredictable ways, and 'can only be discussed in the plural' (ibid, p. 137). And as for all other consumers, it is students that determine the value of their experience.

Evidence gathered through research at the University of Derby in 2015 highlighted students' *personal* expectations and priorities, and that student satisfaction is determined not only by motivators (e.g., students' individual goals and achievements, leading to perceived satisfaction when fulfilled), but also by factors (including the hidden curriculum) which are beyond the individual's control. The research demonstrated the significance of both academic opportunities, (in relation to which students' priorities are based primarily around intellectual challenge and career aspirations), and of other priorities such as building social networks, which depend on the social and cultural aspects of student life.

This research resulted in the introduction of a Student Experience Framework, intended to be inclusive of all learning styles. However, because the University explicitly positions its students as 'partners' but '*not* as consumers' (p. 8, author's emphasis), the research neglected to capture the diversity of students' notions of their own 'total' experience, to enable an inclusive understanding of the lived experience of students, so the resulting framework contradicts the principle that 'there is no one student experience,' and re-enforces an established and singular notion of student engagement as 'active participation' in a relatively narrow and prescriptive range of activities, (e.g., international study trips, and involvement in University processes and projects). This re-enforces conservative and culturally specific notions of acceptable student behaviour and, far from embracing diversity, re-asserts the values of the middle-class intelligentsia, for whom these activities have inherent value. An inclusive framework would not only recognise a much wider range of forms of 'lived experience' as 'active' engagement, but would embrace the *unpredictability* of what these might be, as the learner-consumer engages in their own self-transformation.

To develop inclusive practices in learning and teaching in response to the changing profile of HE students, we need to develop a more sophisticated socio-material approach to student engagement, where agency is understood to involve objects and artefacts as well as students and staff (see Gourlay, 2015; Latour, 2005). To do this, we need to move away from the prioritisation of Student-as-Partner above Student-as-Consumer, by recognising that students are learner-consumers who are actively engaged (as all consumers are) in the development of their own identities through the constant appropriation of objects and experiences, through a wide range of learning styles and modes of interaction.

The concept of 'SaP' masks the power relations between student and academic (and even supports the coercion of students into 'subject positions in the service of the ideologies of the more powerful') because it derives from a discourse where 'participation' is understood only as 'a desirable set of practices' (Gourlay, 2015, pp. 402, 404) rather than in terms of the complex day-to-day practices involved in 'being a student,' as a temporally situated social practice. These practices involve a range of literacies and competencies which students have already acquired as consumers. But in prevailing discussions of student engagement, what students bring is valued less than what they are *expected* to do, and what appears to support a 'student-centred' ethos is simply a re-enforcement of culturally specific notions of acceptable student behaviour. The academic orthodoxy of student engagement attributes it to technology, documents, and frameworks, rather than to the practices of staff and students (see Hayes, 2018).

'Normative notions of student behaviour' (ibid.) are clearly culturally specific, and reproduce white middle-class values, which explains why survey data tells us that students from low-participation groups are less satisfied with their course than those from more privileged backgrounds.

Students co-create their learning experiences through the active selection and appropriation of the resources which universities provide, along with whatever other resources (including social and cultural commodities and experiences) they may have access to, and choose to engage with. Like all consumers, students are learning all the time, and making their own choices about what is interesting, appealing, useful, meaningful, and/or enjoyable, i.e., they are *discriminating*, *reflexive,* and *promiscuous*. This might mean *not* engaging with some aspects of their course, and selecting and appropriating objects, images, and experiences (none of which are inherently more 'interactive' than others), to build on their already-acquired cultural capital and create their own new knowledges and competences. This is what personal tutors need to focus on and to support, and to be trained in the ability to do this.

The 'student-as-partner' approach to student engagement fails to acknowledge the centrality of meaning-making, i.e., creating and interacting with forms of representation, to student practices and subjectivities. 'The day-to-day business of being a student is saturated with a range of complex textual (including the visual and the multimodal) practices, both face-to-face and online. These texts are not merely means of information transfer, but are constitutive of both disciplinary and individual knowledge, and also *identities*' (Gourlay, 2015, p. 406, author's emphasis). '(W)hen learning is exciting and potentially transformative, students and lecturers may feel an intensely personal flow of engagement' and 'this powerful sense of connection with the subject matter and with the other people in the classroom promotes a passion for learning' (Hayes, 2018, p. 31).

To summarise, a mono-cultural approach which privileges student-as-partner over student-as-consumer arguably prevents student engagement, and *stifles* students' reflexivity, (and 'love of learning'), by failing to value whatever cultural competencies and literacies they bring with them, regardless of the types of media with which they have interacted to acquire them, and regardless of the types of learning activities through which they wish to develop them.

INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Not only does a mono-cultural approach to student engagement exacerbate inequalities amongst students; it also prevents the 'student voice' from driving innovation in HE. In a highly competitive environment, leadership in HE is, above all else, about enabling innovative practice to flourish. And personal tutoring has the potential to provide the means of enabling students' changing values, attitudes, and literacies, to drive innovation in HE, by allowing students to use their already-acquired knowledges, competencies, and literacies, to co-create their learning experiences and develop their own reflexivity, and thereby enabling universities to change learning cultures and accommodate increasingly pluralised ways of learning.

But the notion of students as co-creators of their learning is a 'wicked problem' for universities (Willis and Gregory, 2016), partly because the fear of confusing co-creation with being driven by 'conspicuous consumption' (Senior et al., 2018) is stronger than the commitment to inclusive practice. Consequently, while 'co-creation is often spoken about as a pedagogical strategy . . .. There is little evidence of implementation' (Willis and Gregory, 2016, p. 1), and it is reduced to merely enabling the 'student voice,' through which good NSS results can be used to justify the *lack* of innovation.

Innovation in HE is too often understood simply as a matter of promoting 'new' tools (e.g., 'technology enhanced learning'), and, without a more sophisticated approach to student engagement and personalised learning, this merely de-values some learning activities and re-enforces this spurious distinction between 'active' and 'passive' engagement. Institutional policies which 'promote (mainly) economically linked successes of student engagement. . . alienate the outcomes of teaching from the (staff and students) who produce them. Ultimately, 'missing out' this human content, as more embodied forms of learning, may well be self-defeating in reducing, rather than increasing, innovation' (Hayes, 2018, p. 32).

Personal tutoring has huge potential both as an area of activity within which innovative practice can develop, and as a means of knowing and understanding student-consumers, i.e., gathering market intelligence to drive innovation in all aspects of learning and teaching. Persistent attainment gaps are evidence that it is currently failing to add value to the experience of most students, and like many other schemes and frameworks in HE, it is, so far, an example of the 'well-meaning but vague actions which are unlikely to effect change' (Dale-Rivas, 2019, p. 9). Such initiatives need to be backed up by recognition of the work of staff, as well as students, in making them effective, by developing the skills to be able to do this, and by a willingness to acknowledge and address the ways in which the hidden curriculum continues to undermine them.

Creative industries learned long ago that innovation does not 'trickle-down' but is consumer-led (King, 1963), and the history of consumer cultures shows us that markets are complex, continually shifting, and subject to fragmentation, because consumers have developed competencies and literacies which enable them to be increasingly reflexive and culturally promiscuous, and therefore unpredictable.

As with any market-orientated enterprise, innovation requires a willingness to take informed risks, but increased competition, league tables, and teaching excellence framework (TEF) metrics have tended (so far) to intensify the risk-averse tendencies of universities.

Universities in the United Kingdom which have made some progress in narrowing attainment gaps have achieved this by recognising (implicitly at least) that students are learner–consumers, in that they have socially and culturally specific values and tastes through which they develop their own identities. For example, Kingston University London has introduced an Inclusive Curriculum Framework (Amos and Doku, 2019, p. 30) which seeks to ensure that individual learners see themselves reflected in the curriculum (just as the producers of all commodities seek to ensure that consumers see themselves reflected in their products), and De Montfort University has established a pedagogical model (Universal Design For Learning) which reflects an awareness of the unique needs of individual learners in a wide variety of learning contexts, to create learning experiences that remove barriers from the learning environment, which provides students with choices about how they acquire information, and with multiple means of engagement which take into account learner's interests and preferences, and which allows learners to demonstrate their understanding in alternative ways (Merry, 2018).

Most universities now claim to enhance students' employability, but so far there have been relatively few new pedagogical strategies to support this, and disciplinary boundaries tend to prevent new strategies from being developed. For example, we know that interdisciplinarity has driven innovation in the creative industries, because media and practices have converged, and 'hybrid' practitioners are more likely to progress to professional jobs (see Cox, 2005; Bakhshi et al., 2013; Bakhshi and Yang, 2018). Yet most students are still taught by a relatively small course team, without access to the expertise in other departments, and the majority of academics, including personal tutors, are entirely focused on their own discipline, encouraged to do this by an environment where curriculum currency is reduced to 'research informed teaching,' and where 'research' is almost always subject-based. Personal tutors are ideally placed to play a key role in enhancing employability by supporting students in developing their reflexivity, but this is a specialist skill which requires development and support and, as already mentioned, personal tutors are often already tutoring the same students on their modules and assignments which are subject-focused, while the work of helping students to develop their Personal Development Plans, CVs, and professional profiles, is routinely 'out-sourced' to careers advisors.

Innovation in HE requires the development of an inter-disciplinary 'learning culture' in response to C21st economic and social contexts (see McWilliam, 2010), e.g., by contributing to the 'STEAM' (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) agenda. The development of an interdisciplinary learning culture is fundamentally linked to questions of student engagement – indeed the two projects are mutually dependent, because student engagement (and personal tutoring) is about the student, not the subject.

Many practices in HE have remained unchanged for more than a century, and the failure to innovate is due to a failure to recognise that innovation is consumer-led. Effective leadership would promote a staff development ethos to support personal tutoring as a creative practice, i.e., a practice which is responsive to students' constantly changing expectations and aspirations, and as an opportunity for specialist professional development. While many academics are engaged in pedagogical research, and often showcase impressive examples of innovative practice (including in personal tutoring) at learning and teaching conferences, these individuals often struggle to disseminate innovative practice within their own institutions, where innovation in learning and teaching is often not incentivised or recognised except in tokenistic ways. Consequently, while some students may benefit from having an excellent personal tutor who does recognise and value the students' own literacies and competences, institutional structures do not ensure that this is adopted across the institution, indeed they often prevent it.

In order to live up to universities' commitments to inclusive practice, HE leaders need to ensure that research and staff development strategies are focused on innovation which is informed by the knowledges, literacies and aspirations which *all* students bring with them, (rather than solely on the discipline/subject), i.e., to allow innovation to be led by student-consumers.

CONCLUSION

The commodification and marketisation of HE is often perceived as a threat to its accessibility, but access is not in itself inclusive, indeed can be just the opposite. It can be argued that it is only a threat if we cling to a culturally conservative belief in value-free learning, which serves only to reproduce the values of the white intelligentsia. This belief underpins the binary Student-as-Consumer vs. Student-as-Partners opposition which is not only spurious, but is preventing HE from developing innovative inclusive practices. An increasingly competitive landscape provides HE leaders with the opportunity to actively demonstrate their commitments to student-centeredness and inclusivity, through personalised learning, by recognising that students are learner-consumers, actively engaged (as all consumers are) in the transformation of their own identities.

The purpose of HE is not to compensate for an assumed unequal distribution of competences and literacies, but to recognise what *all* students bring to their learning, to encourage them to use these resources, and to value the unexpected ways in which they might do this. Personal tutoring currently functions primarily to prevent, identify and address non-engagement, where engagement is understood only as a particular set of behaviours, but it has the potential to become the means by which individual students can develop their reflexivity, enabled by the tutor's recognition and affirmation of whatever knowledge and competence they bring with them, and of their preferred ways of learning. This would enable universities to accommodate and develop a much more pluralised range of ways of learning, to reflect a much more heterogenous mix of students, and provide properly 'personalised' learning.

This requires the concept of the learner-consumer to be embraced, and best practice in personalised learning to be embedded across the institution, allowing *all* students to benefit. Setting up a Personal Tutoring Scheme provides a framework, but personal tutors need to be supported and developed to work with students on developing their reflexivity, while also enabling the universities to *know* their students, to use this knowledge to drive innovation in learning and teaching, and to transform 'university life' so that it reflects the diversity of its participants.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY
published: 21 July 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00101

Check for updates

Knowing You: Personal Tutoring, Learning Analytics and the Johari Window

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Recent decades have seen increased concern for the student experience by higher education institutions, along with more pressure on students due to the highly competitive job market and the financial implications of doing a degree. The growth in the number of non-traditional students attending higher education has added to pressures on students and staff. There are impacts on the mental health and well-being of both as university education becomes massified, commodified and increasingly time-pressured. In this context, informed and kindly human interaction is crucial to mitigate negative influences. However, staff are less likely than ever to know their students well enough to have meaningful and impactful exchanges. Student record systems and learning analytics present themselves as a promising tool to be used in finding solutions to the complex problems of student achievement and well-being. This conceptual paper explores the use of big data and learning analytics to facilitate the work of personal tutors (academic advisors), illustrated by practical examples from the Student Support System used at the University of Plymouth. It will argue that learning analytics systems have the potential to facilitate communication and sharing of information, and thus enhance the quality of communication between personal tutors and their tutees to improve student engagement and support the tutee. However, the major contention of the paper is that information requires the lens of a humanistic framework in order to be transformed into knowledge and insight. The heuristic of the Johari Window is presented as a possible tool to stimulate thinking and to integrate the information from learning analytics into a meaningful framework in order to develop a powerful way of knowing tutees better and thus creating more supportive relationships with them. As such, the paper proposes an original contribution to the underexplored field of the use of learning analytics in personal tutoring in the UK, and hopes to stimulate empirical research in this area.

Keywords: personal tutoring, learning analytics, higher education, Johari Window, dashboards

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
Wendy Gates Troxel,
Kansas State University, United States

Reviewed by:
Susan Smith,
University of Sussex, United Kingdom
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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *31 January 2020*
Accepted: *03 June 2020*
Published: *21 July 2020*

Citation:
Lowes R (2020) Knowing You: Personal Tutoring, Learning Analytics and the Johari Window. Front. Educ. 5:101. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00101

INTRODUCTION

> *Learning analytics is emblematic of the new holistic approaches to student retention and is likely to have profound implications for personal tutoring.* (Webb et al., 2017, p. 6)

Recent decades have seen increased concern for the student experience by higher education institutions (HEIs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland since the introduction of fees in 1998 and then their increase to £9,000 in 2012 (from 2017 rising with inflation). At the same time, there has been growing pressure on students due to the highly competitive job market and increased financial implications of taking a degree course (Brown, 2016). There was a decline in student satisfaction with their course 2012–2017 and, while rates are starting to recover, only 41% consider their course good or very good value for money, which drops to 38% for post-92 universities (Neves and Hillman, 2019). The widening participation agenda has meant an increase in the number of non-traditional students such as working students, students with parental responsibilities or first generation to attend higher education, who often face greater stress than students with fewer responsibilities or a family tradition of university education. This combination of pressures on students (and staff) may in part explain the growth in mental health issues and low levels of well-being currently reported (Bentley, 2016a,b; Brown, 2016; Yeung et al., 2016; Clarke et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2018; Morrish, 2019; Neves and Hillman, 2019). Across the sector, this issue is causing concern and institutions are developing prevention strategies (Universities UK, 2017; Clarke et al., 2018).

In a massified higher education context, large classes and heavy teaching and marking loads mean that staff are less likely to know individual students—even their personal tutees—well enough to have meaningful relationships. Around a third of students feel there is too little interaction with staff (Neves and Hillman, 2019). There is a need to mitigate the effects of this pressurized situation and to supplement lack of knowledge about tutees by access to detailed and relevant information about the student from university systems that draw on large stores of data.

While reviewing agreements with the Office of Fair Access Hipkin noted two trends: one for developing or resurrecting personal tutoring policies (Hipkin, 2016a), and the other was the setting up of data driven dashboards for displaying learning analytics to academic staff and students (Hipkin, 2016b, 2017). These two trends, he felt, had potentially a very powerful synergy: *"The new world of 'data everywhere' opens up a potential game-changing opportunity to reinvent the role of academic advisor"* (Hipkin, 2016b, p. 6). While there is as yet little published on the relationship between analytics and personal tutoring, Nottingham Trent University (NTU) reports that its dashboard has facilitated more effective personal tutoring (Sclater et al., 2016), and Grey et al. (2017) note an emerging trend to encourage tutors to make use of these systems. So, it would seem that the combination of personal tutoring and learning analytics presents itself as a potential solution to the problem of the pressures experienced in what has become a very high stakes environment for all, with a need for supportive and targeted interventions to support student well-being and achievement.

This paper aims to stimulate discussion by briefly exploring recent developments in the use of learning analytics in UK higher education institutions and considering their potential and their limitations. Access to data and learning analytics has great potential to have a positive effect on personal tutoring—with the proviso that this is interpreted through the lens of human understanding, that there is consideration of the "promises and pitfalls" of big data (Dede et al., 2016, elaborated on by Roberts et al., 2016), and that the former are exploited and the latter avoided. The key argument is that to lead to actionable insights, data needs to be moved up the value chain. The Johari Window will be presented as a useful heuristic for achieving this, illustrating its potential for use in personal tutoring with examples using features of the Student Support System used across all faculties at the University of Plymouth to show how it can provide a framework to explore the hinterland beyond the dashboards, but, first, the use of analytics will briefly be explored.

THE DEVELOPMENT IF ANALYTICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Data collection and analysis has long been employed in the business context, and the use of analytics for motivation and self-monitoring in sport and recreation, with applications like Map My Run, is well-known. However, higher education as a sector is only recently catching up with the data revolution, in an effort to retain competitive advantage (Sclater et al., 2016; Shacklock, 2016). The Higher Education Commission in the report "From Bricks to Clicks" emphasized the potential of data collection and analysis to enhance support for students by tailoring it to the individual (Shacklock, 2016, p. 4), as long as certain conditions are met and a range of issues, such as data use and management, and staff training, are carefully considered. The commission strongly recommends that all universities should implement learning analytics systems and JISC has set up a ground-breaking large data warehousing project to support this (JISC, n.d.). JISC makes the bold claim that *"learning analytics can help to improve the quality of teaching, cut drop-out rates, build better relationships between students and staff and empower students to take ownership of their learning"* (Feldman, 2016).

Examples of Analytics Systems

Greenwich University's staff dashboard is described as a "Tutee on a page concept" for staff, delivered through the SRS Self-Service system with simplified access to: demographic information; course, module, and administrative information; grades and transcript data; UCAS personal statement; meeting scheduling; and comments/notes (University of Greenwich, 2016). Participation data is only accessible to personal tutors and is there to "act as a conversation starter between tutor and student." It was reported that students were positive about the system (University of Greenwich, 2016).

De Montfort uses MyProgress, a student facing system, which Brooks and Moriarty describe as "an analytical tool to help understand student engagement within a course of study" (Brooks and Moriarty, 2015). The motivation for its development was as "*A catalyst to improve student retention and progression*" and reflected a desire by the university to improve the effectiveness of the personal tutoring system. The tool captures student engagement by measuring access to the library and library resources; use of BlackBoard (assignment submissions, module information, learning resources); printing, copying, and building entrances. It is highly visual in the way it presents the data to the student. Unlike Greenwich, where students were enthusiastic about the project, Brooks and

Moriarty reported that some students perceived it negatively as a "big brother" approach.

Similarly, the Nottingham Trent University (NTU) Student Dashboard presents data to students on their library use, use of online learning environment, card swipes into university buildings attendance data, e-book usage, and course work submission to provide an overall engagement score. It provides information to staff such as the previous day's engagement rating, notes and alerts in addition to basic data on the student such as name, course etc. (Nottingham Trent University, 2018). These measures are presented as an engagement rating compared with peers. The handbook informs students about the likely relationship of their engagement score with their final achievement:

> *At NTU we have gathered strong evidence that a higher engagement level results in higher academic success. In 2013–14, 81% of final year students with a high average engagement rating achieved a 2:1 or 1 s, compared to only 42% of students with a low average engagement* (Nottingham Trent University, 2016, p. 3).

Rather like De Monfort, the NTU dashboard seems to be oriented toward using data to influence students. Lawther et al. (2016) carried out a survey which indicated that the use of the dashboard has fostered positive student behaviors shown to be predictors of student success, such as a higher level of engagement with learning resources and better attendance.

The Student Support System

The University of Plymouth uses the Student Support System (S3), a mainly staff-facing dashboard designed with the aim of providing access to frequently needed (but often difficult to find/produce) reports, metrics and data. It supports academics in managing personal tutoring, supporting students, management reporting, and a number of other activities at different levels. It is unusual, in that it was a grassroots initiative, which arose directly from the perceived needs of academics in one department. The system has developed via the creator responding to feedback from users and bringing in new features in a timely and responsive manner, as required, and so has benefitted from years of user-informed, organic development. It is now used across the university and a revised version (S4) will be in place by the start of the 2020–21 academic year.

A simple interface provides access to a number of useful functions that allow staff to access information at programme and module level, as well as via the individual Student Record Card, which contains course information, attendance data, submission details, and marks. Staff can communicate with students (via email, recorded on the Record Card) and colleagues (via notes on the Student Record Card and email). The student version provides less detail in fewer fields, but is still a handy summary of the most important information a student needs to know about their course. It does not include peer comparison metrics.

For a detailed description of the Student Record Card and how S3 supports personal tutoring, see **Figures A1**, **A2**.

Whose System?

The Higher Education Commission includes a recommendation that: "HEIs should ensure that the digital agenda is being led at an appropriate level within their institution" (Shacklock, 2016, p. 8). It might be interesting to consider creatively both what is meant by "led" and "appropriate level" in order to produce a system that is really responsive to the needs of users. User engagement with any system proposed is a key factor in success. The opportunity to influence the development of the system may lead to a genuine level of buy-in from staff and greater engagement with the system. A central underpinning principle of Plymouth's S3 is that learning analytics systems should be for the benefit of the end users. Its strapline is: "*Providing the right information, to the right people, in the right way, in a single location*" and its development has been driven by user feedback and requests. Roberts et al. (2016) also recommend that students' views be considered in the design of learning analytics systems and both staff and student focus groups informed the development of S4.

Knowing Too Much?

As mentioned above, Roberts et al. (2016) explored students' views of their data being harvested, stored and analyzed and found they expressed some misgivings. While they saw potential benefits for personal tutoring, they also felt that access to their data could lead to assumptions being made about them, and them being labeled. Students are often surprised, and sometimes disconcerted when they realize their tutor has access to such things as their marks or the timestamp of their assignment hand-in. With that in mind, tutors must remember to make thoughtful and sensitive interpretations of the data they have access to.

The Value of Data

However, at this point it is necessary to insert a caveat: it is important to distinguish between the information captured by analytics systems (attendance data, access to resources, marks) and the behavior they are taken as a proxy for (personal engagement, study habits, learning). Dowland (2014, p. 1) pointed out "*student analytics typically draws on data that is easy to measure and capture, and ignores information that is intangible*," a point echoed by a number of practitioners and researchers who question the validity of proffered proxies of behavior (Stein, 2016; Grey et al., 2017). Hipkin (2016b, 2017) warns against being drawn into a "digital illusion" and states that we will create a system doomed to failure if we separate the data easily available from learning analytics from that which may be more difficult to access—and which perhaps cannot be accessed digitally. Grey et al. (2017) point out that analytics systems and dashboards are only a tool to be used rather than a definitive solution to problems with engagement and retention, affirming that "*Data is meaningless, information is valuable*." Clow (2012, p. 135) emphasizes that '*the learning analytics cycle is not complete cycle is not complete until these metrics are used to drive one or more* ***interventions*** *that have some effect on learners*'.

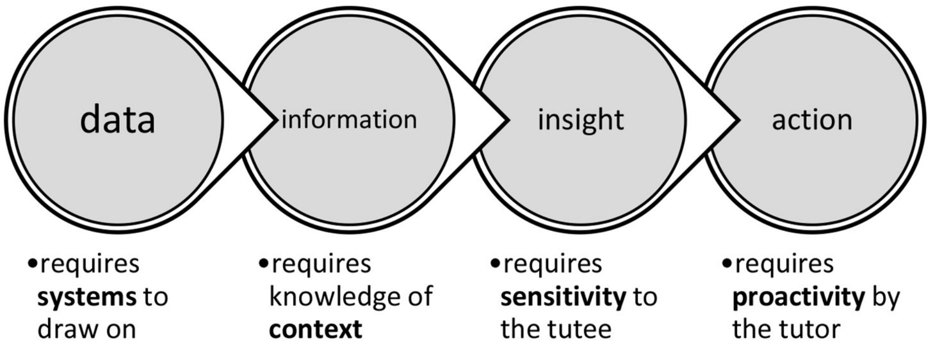

FIGURE 1 | Moving along the value chain.

Moving Along the Value Chain

The value of learning analytics is in the interventions they facilitate. There is a value chain between data and action that rises with each step: data must be transformed into information; information to knowledge; knowledge to insight; and insight into action (**Figure 1**). Clearly, context will be a crucial variable, and context may be composed of factors which are internal or external to the student. Data is an excellent raw ingredient, but it requires the correct balance of elements, cooked in the right way, and then selected and served up at the right time to the right people to be nutritious and digestible.

In short, it is important to use technology, but also to remain mindful of the need to draw on other sources of information and to maintain human curiosity about the data presented and what it might signify in personal terms.

Analytics and Personal Tutoring

Studies on the uses of analytics to support personal tutoring are remarkable by their absence, although tutoring is occasionally referred to in passing in general studies on the uses of big data in teaching and learning, and it is included by Ahern (2018) who examines the potential of learning analytics as a tool to support student well-being. It was mentioned in the HEA review of studies on interventions relating to access, retention attainment and progression (Webb et al., 2017) presenting recommendations of what educators could do, which included interventions relevant to personal tutoring. They suggest that tutors consider how they can draw on information from data systems to enhance their tutoring practices. However, the review also highlighted the need to understand "*the social and emotional landscape of students*" in order make interventions sensitive and meaningful (Webb et al., 2017, p. 8).

One practical discussion of how dashboard-based analytics can support effective tutoring is Lochtie et al.'s (2018, pp. 92–97) useful and succinct overview, which contains practical suggestions and invites readers to consider the opportunities these systems offer and their limitations. If data from learning analytics can provide information to tutors, as a first step toward allowing them to deepen their understanding of their tutees, then it may lead to effective interventions. However, for this to be the case, the data has to be interpreted and applied within a meaningful framework. One possible example of such a framework will be explored below, but first it is useful to further consider the motivation for harnessing data.

What Are we Using the Data For?

> *Any learning analytics solution is only as good as the action it prompts.* (Lawther et al., 2016, p. 21)

For personal tutors it is hard to overstate the importance of information on students being easily accessible and in one place as a prerequisite to allow them to work more effectively with their tutees. However, there may be a variety of agendas around retention and achievement affecting what is done with student data and how it is presented (Dede et al., 2016; Roberts et al., 2016). The presentation of student data in dashboards or other such pages may reflect different slants on supporting student achievement. This begs certain questions. What information is presented, in how much detail and to who? What is the underlying motivation for presenting this data—informing or influencing? What effect does this have: Does the scrutiny of actions and presentation of data foster in students a healthy desire to improve or provoke an unhealthy anxiety that one's actions are being monitored and compared? Finally, we must consider: how is data transformed into information, and then how is that information transformed into knowledge, insight and action?

Ahern (2018) contends that data from learning analytics can be used to monitor student well-being and create more effective support systems, with the opportunity for proactive interventions at an earlier stage before problems escalate. She notes that little research has been carried out on the effectiveness of learning analytics, recognizes that data require sensitive interpretation, and acknowledges the ethical issues, a point emphasized by Roberts et al. (2016), whose research indicates that students do not regard the collection and display of their data as an unmitigated benefit, raising issues such as the potential for prejudgement and bias, invasion of privacy, the undermining of independence and creation of stress.

A JISC report claims that in general, most students perceive analytics positively (Sclater et al., 2016). However, Hipkin (2016b) is skeptical about the "unqualified good of dashboards"

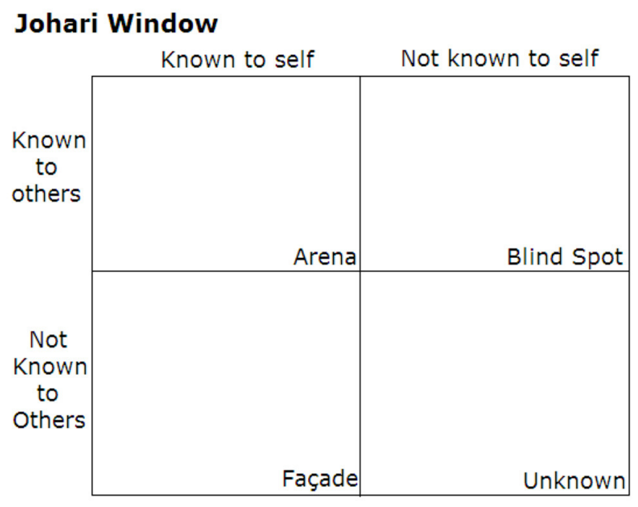

FIGURE 2 | Johari Window.

and warns against a simplistic view of the value of data, reminding us that "*trying to create a predictive algorithm for an individual student from datasets alone will prove elusive*." With this in mind, the focus will be on how the information and functionality of a learning analytics can assist staff in providing an effective personal tutoring experience, using the functionality of a system used at the University of Plymouth. At this point, it is useful to pause and examine a framework for making the most of this information to enhance personal tutoring and to stimulate movement along the value chain.

THE JOHARI WINDOW

The Johari Window is a useful heuristic for understanding and developing aspects of interpersonal communication. Cipriani (2004) describes it as "a disclosure/feedback model of self-awareness, an information processing tool." Since Luft's original article on the Window was published in 1961, it has been interpreted in many ways and adapted to various uses.

The Johari Window is a quadrant, described by Luft as "*A graphic model of awareness in interpersonal relations*" (Luft, 1961). It focuses on knowledge about a person (or group of people) with two dimensions: self and other, and two values: known and not known. This results in four different quadrants within the larger quadrant, as can been seen below. Each quadrant has a name reflecting the dimensions and values (**Figure 2**).

Information that is known by both the self and others will be in the Arena, the open area. Information which is known by the self and but not by others will be in the hidden area, often known as the Façade. Information that is known to others, but not the self, is in the Blind Spot and the Unknown area contains information which is known neither to the self nor others, and which may, ultimately, be unknowable.

The four areas are not in fact equal sizes as depicted in the diagram, but will vary dynamically over time. A healthy and positive interpersonal relationship requires a large area of shared knowledge (Arena). The Arena will expand as other areas decrease in size: for example, the Blind Spot may decrease by others giving feedback on things that a person is not aware of and the Facade will decrease through disclosure of that which was hidden or private. Information in the Unknown area requires some sort of revelation, and will only be discovered via new insights or experiences.

The Window is presented as four distinct quadrants, but it may be helpful to view the divisions not as clear-cut separations but rather as blurred lines. It may be difficult to decide when something is Unknown or simply hidden behind the Façade, and it may have qualities of each. Something in the Blind Spot actually may be a latent but ill-formed intuition in the person's mind and so is half-way into the Arena. The content viewed through the Window is not fixed but fluid.

There is a limited number of studies relating to the Johari Window. A number of different disciples, such as nursing, business, education, and psychology, have published accounts of how the tool has been applied to their area without providing evidence of its effect. Few scholars have used it as the conceptual basis for empirical research, exceptions being Boxer et al. (2013) who used it to examine perceptions among members of a management team; Gallrein et al. (2013) who looked at self and others' attribution of personality traits and Shenton (2007) who examined information needs using the Johari Window framework. Hamzah et al. (2016) used the Window as the basis for a conceptualization of Customer Knowledge. The Johari window has also been applied to analyzing organizational behavior (Hase et al., 1999) and general communication issues (Horine, 1990; Cassidy, 2014). Other articles mentioning the Johari window are mainly examples of and proposals for practical application of the framework for self-development and training purposes. A number of papers on nursing education propose it as a helpful tool in developing self-awareness (Jack and Smith, 2007; South, 2007; Verklan, 2007; Jack and Miller, 2008).

The various studies show that the Johari Window seems to act as an effective device to allow a deeper exploration of a range of issues and situations. Shenton (2007) states that it can *"represent existing well-recognized phenomena within a logical structure."* It can also bring clarity and a sharper focus to fuzzy or ill-organized phenomena by situating them within a logical structure that provides the user with a supportive template for thought and action.

Surprisingly, there appear to be no studies on the use of this tool in relation to personal tutoring.

How Can the Johari Window Help With Tutoring?

A common complaint from students is that their tutor does not really know them. One student in an anonymous feedback survey described it as "impersonal tutoring"! Equally, staff realize that as a tutor it is difficult to know tutees well with only sporadic contact: *"And if you want to 'reach' their behavior, earn their trust or even influence their development truly, that is not possible if* *the contact is only incidental"* (Schut, 2017). Another issue is that not every student needs the same amount of time, attention or help, and some forewarning of whether a tutee may need more help and attention would be useful preparation for an effective tutorial. There is clearly a need for a shortcut to information that is contextual and helpful.

The systems that universities use to capture and present data on students, both static (e.g., pre-entry qualifications) and fluid (e.g., attendance data) can provide a wealth of information on students. The framework of the Johari window can help to raise awareness of how much tutors (do not) know about their tutees and suggest strategies for transforming the information provided into knowledge and insight, in order to know tutees better and hence to build a better relationship. A tutor's awareness of their tutee's capabilities, interests and needs will clearly underpin their ability to support their tutee's development, and is an important part of their competence in their role.

The diagram below represents a meeting with a new tutee. The shared area of knowledge is small, as the tutor may know very little more than the student's name and course (**Figure 3**).

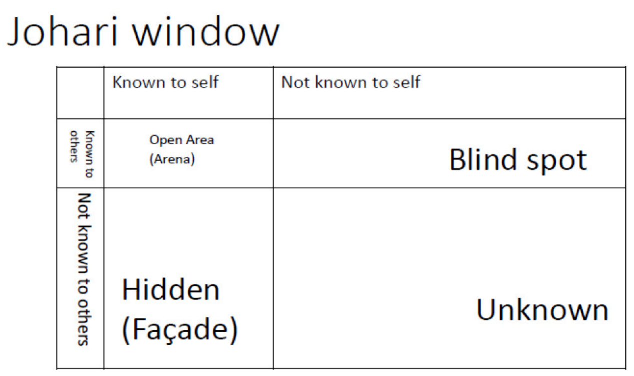

FIGURE 3 | Johari Window for a new tutee.

Access to a well thought-out and well-organized student record system or dashboard can already enhance this knowledge by providing extra details, and a dynamic system will accrue information as the course progresses, including information input by the tutor and other members of staff, or, potentially, the student themselves if the system allows. More importantly, the information on the system can also provide an important starting point for a conversation that will increase and enrich the shared knowledge for the benefit of the student's personal and academic development. In this, the Johari window offers a constructive guiding framework. The following section will discuss how the system used at one university can provide information that, viewed through this framework, is the starting point for productive conversations.

Combining Data and the Johari Window to Enhance Tutoring

Each of the quadrants in the Johari Window can be informed by access to data.

Arena

The area of shared knowledge in the Arena can be informed by data on the course and modules studied; previous studies at partner colleges or on other courses; marks, including breakdown of marks within modules; assessment deadlines; time stamp of assignment submissions; Disability Assist Statements (e.g., evaluation reports for "reasonable adjustments"); emails sent by module tutors; notes recorded by staff; and attendance data. These can illustrate student progress and indicate areas of achievement or concern. This information can also be used to instigate pro-active advising: e.g., being able to access a student's coursework deadlines and spotting clusters may offer an opportunity to ascertain the tutee's time management skills and offer advice if appropriate. Where a dashboard is integrated with the Virtual Learning Environment, it may be possible to

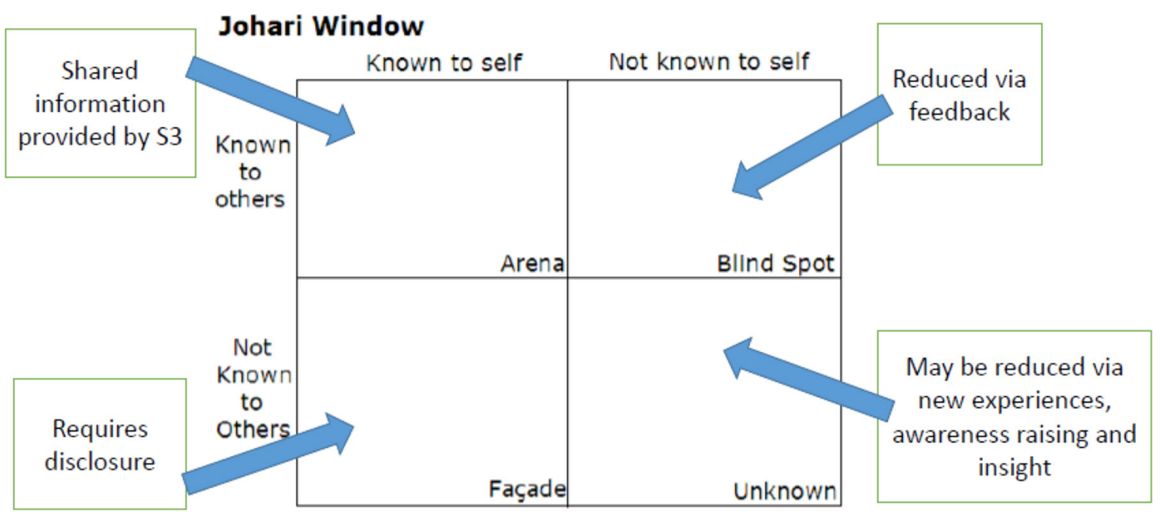

FIGURE 4 | Johari Window and personal tutoring.

spot engagement patterns which offer insight how the tutee is managing their studies. Crucially, the information can pave the way for conversations that may reduce the Blind Spot or the Façade (**Figure 4**).

Blind Spot

Access to course-marks, and especially to the marks breakdown among different elements of assessment, such as group work presentations, essays, exams etc. opens the way for conversations about how the student is doing academically and what may be helping or hindering their development. If the student is willing, and feedback on work is accessible, then the tutor can help the student to get insight into strengths and weaknesses in various aspects of their work that may not be clear to them. Other information on the system can point out things a student was overlooking: for example, communications that they may have missed are recorded on the system and can be pointed out to them, which may make them more aware that they should develop a professional approach to checking email. A tendency to last minute submissions, recorded in the timestamp, may point to a weakness in time-management that the tutee had not considered. The Blind Spot does not, however, contain only negatives or weaknesses; there may be strengths and qualities that an individual may be unaware of until others reflect these back to them. The tutor can then signpost further support and opportunities.

Questions that can be asked:

- *Did you Realize that several tutors have emailed you about your engagement?*
- *Did you know your attendance is below average for the module?*
- *I see you have done exceptionally well in your (Operations Management) module, particularly the presentation. What do you think allowed you to achieve that mark?*
- *You have done less well in the last assignment. What feedback did you get? Can you pull out any development points?*

Façade

As information provided by the system and other issues are discussed, there are opportunities for students to disclose concerns, areas of weakness, or circumstances that are affecting their studies. A pattern of poor performance in assessment may be due to exam phobia, undiagnosed dyslexia or a fear of speaking in front of an audience. Behind poor attendance may lie a family problem, health issues, or a financial crisis. A Disability Assist Statement indicates an area that may require special support, or at least understanding. These kinds of things are possible starting points for questions or comments which invite, but do not demand, disclosure. Disclosure about strengths and interests can also be invited.

Questions that can be asked:

- *I notice you usually miss Friday lectures—is something affecting your attendance?*
- *I see a Disability Assist Statement has just been added to your record card. Is there any support you might need?*
- *Are there assessment types that are easier or harder for you?*
- *You have done exceptionally well in modules relating to (Finance)—do you have a background in this?*

Unknown

This area holds by definition things that are unknown about the person. They may be potentialities, both positive and negative. In the context of tutoring, it is useful to think of them as qualities and competences that are as yet undiscovered. New experiences and opportunities may lead to the discovery of talents and aptitudes that were previously unrealized. For example, a student who had never previously mixed with international students discovered an interest in other cultures by doing an extracurricular course in global citizenship and consequently started volunteering at a charity for resettling refugees. One of the key roles of a tutor is to signpost opportunities that lead the student to discover more about themselves and to develop new capabilities.

Questions that can be asked:

- *Do you have any work experience? Are there any opportunities you might consider?*
- *Have you seen (e.g., of extracurricular opportunity)—do you think this might interest you?*
- *Have you visited the (Careers and Employability) Services for a (careers counseling) session?*
- *Are there any areas of skills or competencies that you might like to develop?*

Finally, the areas of the window may be resized due to the movement of information. In **Figure 5** below, we can see how shared knowledge has grown.

Knowing You

The Johari window can also act as a framework for the tutor to evaluate how well they know a tutee. How big is the Arena for that tutee? Is there much that the tutor simply does not know because it remains hidden behind the Facade? Have we seen the tutee grow in self-awareness and skill as the Blind Spot

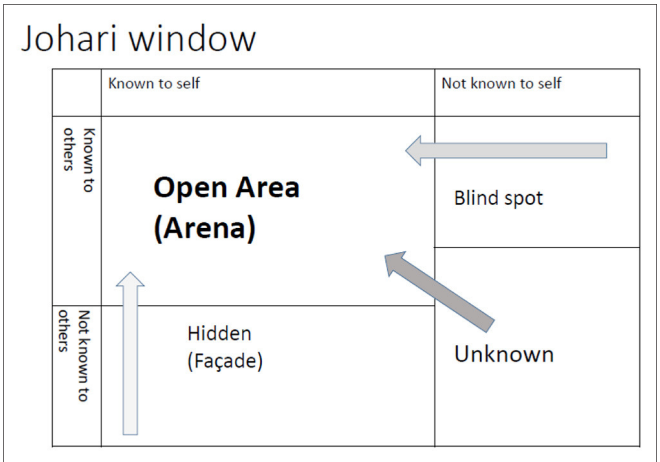

FIGURE 5 | Johari Window with enlarged Arena.

becomes smaller? Have any discoveries opened up the Unknown area? The success of tutorials might be measured by whether and how the boundaries between the areas in the Johari Window have shifted.

An example from my personal experience shows how boundaries shifted by following up data on module choices: questions about these choices revealed in one student a fear of exams (she had avoided any module with assessment by examination), while another shared an ambition to become an entrepreneur. The first student then declined the opportunity to access support but decided to self-manage, while the second was signposted to a start-up mentoring programme run by the university. Basic personal information may potentially reveal a great deal if pertinent questions are asked. One student gave the same home and term time address in their contact information. When I queried this as an error, I discovered that the student was estranged from his family, had come out of care, and had no other home than his current lodgings. He confided that he was working 30 h a week to support himself. Naturally, this gave me considerably more insight into my tutee and his personal situation, a topic that might otherwise never have been broached.

As tutors, we can consider for each of our tutees how much knowledge is in the Arena and how we might draw back the curtains on the other areas. If each tutorial encounter is a small step toward greater knowledge of tutees, fast-forwarded by thoughtful interrogation of the data, then there is the chance we may create relationships that are more meaningful and effective.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hipkin (2016b) contends that learning analytics offer a potential solution to the difficulties tutors face in providing effective support, while warning us that it is crucial to embed the information presented by learning analytics into a person-centered system of tutoring which draws on other sources of information. The heuristic of the Johari Window has been presented as a possible tool to stimulate thinking and to integrate the information from learning analytics into a meaningful framework in order to develop a powerful way of knowing our tutees better, to move us along the value chain and thus create more supportive relationships.

The scope of the present paper is limited to an exploration of ideas, grounded in the literature, and personal experience. A useful development would be to carry out research on the Johari Window (and other heuristics), to provide an evidence base for their use. While the personal tutoring relationship is a private area, which does not lend itself easily to research, it would be possible and useful to carry out a tutor and/or student evaluation of the helpfulness of heuristic tools. Do they support a way of thinking that allows a richer use of the information provided by analytics? Does such a heuristic provide support for tutors new to the role who may benefit from a mental framework to organize their knowledge of their tutees and to suggest areas for exploration? Could these approaches have a positive influence on learning, persistence, belonging, retention, and completion? Most importantly for a research agenda: how can such things be measured?

The question of what supports, nurtures, and influences relationships is an important one and should not be shied away from because it is difficult to analyze. The interaction of the quantitative data produced by analytics and the qualitative aspects of human insight and understanding has the potential to bring about a sea change in personal tutoring. This is an opportunity that we must not fail to understand and to grasp.

A study on the effect of the Johari Window, focusing on tutors, is currently underway to gather empirical data. I welcome expressions of interest in collaborating in the study.

In the meantime, it is worth us experimenting with this, and other heuristics, to deepen the relationship with our tutees and to exploit more fully the information provided by learning analytics. In the absence of rich data and supportive frameworks to maximize the effectiveness of tutorial meetings, these relationships will be condemned to subsist in the shallow soil of limited time and information.

Ricky Lowes is Senior Personal Tutor in the Plymouth Business School, and Vice-Chair of the UKAT Research Committee. Any correspondence on readers' experience of using the Johari Window or other such thinking tools for personal tutoring is warmly welcomed.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is an original article where I offer insights into and a new perspective on the emerging field of learning analytics in relation to personal tutoring. This is significant because we have reached a critical moment in terms of student support and in the development of technologies to harness and present data, but there is scant mention in academic literature of the potential synergies between these two areas. The critical question is how to engage with data in a thoughtful and effective way. The framework I explore offers a way of doing this. Many practitioners will find the article relevant, and I hope stimulating, as it proposes practical strategies based on a theoretical framework to resolve the perennial problem of how to be effective in personal tutoring.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Emily McIntosh, Wendy Troxel, Oli Webb, Bonnie Latimer, and Richard Saundry for their helpful comments on drafts of this article.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

APPENDIX

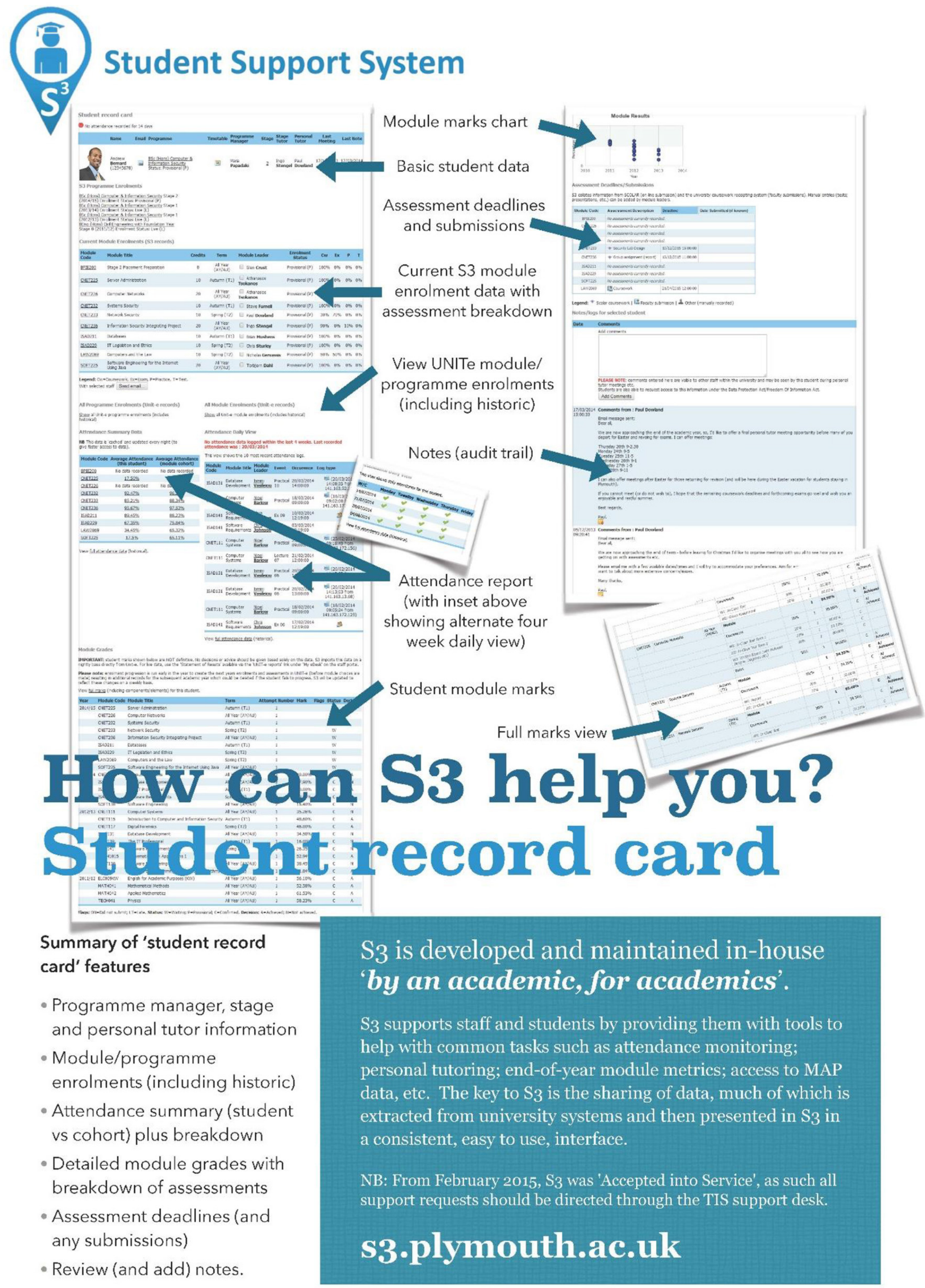
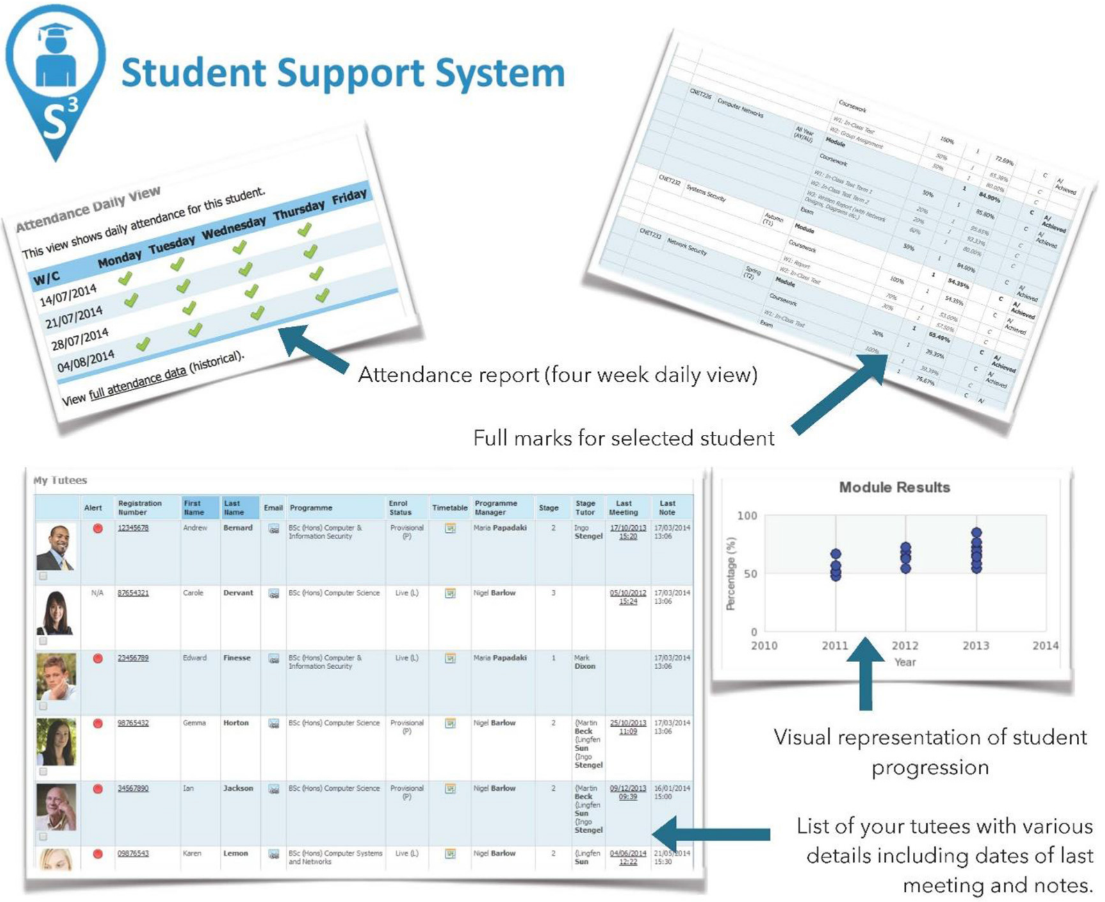


FIGURE A1 | How can S3 help you? Student support card.



How can S3 help you?
Personal tutoring

Summary of 'tutoring' features

- List of tutees
- Attendance alerts
- Review historic module/ programme enrolments
- Attendance summary (tutee vs cohort)
- View student module (and more detailed) grades
- Review assessment deadlines (and any submissions)
- Review (and add) notes.

S3 is developed and maintained in-house '*by an academic, for academics*'.

S3 supports staff and students by providing them with tools to help with common tasks such as attendance monitoring; personal tutoring; end-of-year module metrics; access to MAP data, etc. The key to S3 is the sharing of data, much of which is extracted from university systems and then presented in S3 in a consistent, easy to use, interface.

NB: From February 2015, S3 was 'Accepted into Service', as such all support requests should be directed through the TIS support desk.

s3.plymouth.ac.uk

FIGURE A2 | How can S3 help you? Personal qutoring.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 04 November 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.531424

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Making a #Stepchange? Investigating the Alignment of Learning Analytics and Student Wellbeing in United Kingdom Higher Education Institutions

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OPEN ACCESS

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *31 January 2020*
Accepted: *31 August 2020*
Published: *04 November 2020*

Citation:
Ahern SJ (2020) Making a #Stepchange? Investigating the Alignment of Learning Analytics and Student Wellbeing in United Kingdom Higher Education Institutions. Front. Educ. 5:531424. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.531424

In recent years there has been growing concern around student wellbeing and in particular student mental-health. Numerous newspaper articles (Ferguson, 2017; Shackle, 2019) have been published on the topic and a BBC 3 documentary (Byrne, 2017) was produced on the topic of student suicide. These have coincided with a number of United Kingdom Higher Education sector initiatives and reports, the highest profile of these being the Universities United Kingdom "#StepChange" report (Universities UK, 2017) and the Institute for Public Policy Research "Not By Degrees" report ("Not by Degrees: Improving Student Mental Health in the UK's Universities" 2017). Simultaneously, learning analytics has been growing as a field in the United Kingdom, with a number of institutions running services predominantly based on student retention and progression, the majority of which make use of the Jisc Learning Analytics service. Much of the data used in these services is behavioral data: interactions with various IT systems, attendance at events and/or engagement with library services. Wellbeing research indicates that since changes in wellbeing, are indicated by changes in behavior, these changes could be identified via learning analytics. Research has also shown that students react very emotively to learning analytics data and that this may impact on their wellbeing. The 2017 Universities United Kingdom (UUK) #StepChange report states: "Institutions are encouraged to align learning analytics to the mental health agenda to identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support." (Universities UK, 2017). This study was undertaken in the 2018/19 academic year, a year after the launch of the #StepChange framework and after the formal transition of Jisc's learning analytics work with partner HEIs to a national learning analytics service. With further calls for whole institutional responses to address student wellbeing and mental health concerns, including the recently published University Mental Health Charter this study aims to answer two questions. Firstly, is there evidence of the #StepChange recommendation being adopted in current learning analytics implementations? Secondly, has there been any consideration of the impact on staff and student wellbeing and mental health resulting from the introduction of learning analytics? Analysis of existing learning analytics applications have found that there is insufficient granularity in the data used to be able to identify changes in an individual's behavior at a required level, in addition this data is collected with insufficient context to be able to truly understand what the data represents. Where there are connections between learning analytics and student support these are related to student retention and academic performance. Although it has been identified that learning analytics can impact on student and staff behaviors, there is no evidence of staff and student wellbeing being considered in current policies or in the existing policy frameworks. The recommendation from the 2017 Stepchange framework has not been met and reviews of current practices need to be undertaken if learning analytics is to be part of Mentally Healthy Universities moving forward. In conclusion, although learning analytics is a growing field and becoming operationalized within United Kingdom Higher Education it is still in its reactive infancy. Current data models rely on proxies for student engagement and may not truly represent student behaviors. At this time there is inadequate sophistication for the use of learning analytics to identify student wellbeing concerns. However, as with all technologies, learning analytics is not benign, and changes to ways of working impact on both staff and students, wellbeing professionals should be included as key stakeholders in the development of learning analytics and student support policies and wellbeing considerations explicitly mentioned and taken into account.

Keywords: learning analytics, policy, wellbeing, personal tutoring, frameworks

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing concern around student wellbeing and in particular mental health. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." (Saxena and Setoya, 2014, p. 6), it is this definition against which this work is framed.

Numerous newspaper articles have been published on the topic and a BBC 3 documentary was produced on the topic of student suicide. These have coincided with a number of United Kingdom Higher Education sector initiatives and reports. The highest profile of these being the Universities United Kingdom "#StepChange" report, the Institute for Public Policy Research "Not By Degrees" report and the University Mental Health Charter, the development of which is being led by the charity Student Minds in conjunction with other partner organizations.

The 2017 Universities United Kingdom (UUK) #StepChange report and framework aim to encourage university leaders to adopt a whole-institution approach to improving mental health this is required as student wellbeing is shaped by the environment created by the higher education institution (HEI) attended and the support available to the student, including any learning analytics implementations. As noted in the GuildHE report (GuildHE, 2018, p. 5) "It should not be left to the student services team to develop and implement a wellbeing strategy, but activities should be owned and enacted in every part of institutional life, from security and estates to the academic curriculum."

The #StepChange report and framework provide a number of recommendations linked to eight dimensions on how this can be achieved (Universities UK, 2017). The second of these dimensions, Data, has become increasingly important in the Higher Education sector. The #Stepchange framework recommendation 2.5 sees institutions encouraged to use traditionally attainment focused data in a new way: "Institutions are encouraged to align learning analytics to the mental health agenda to identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support" (Universities UK, 2017).

Data used in learning analytics applications comes from existing university systems; student information systems, VLEs, library data, and attendance monitoring (Wong and Li, 2019), all of which is behavioral data. Changes in wellbeing can be indicated by changes in behavior. As the data used by learning analytics systems is behavioral, it may be possible to identify wellbeing related behavior changes via these systems. Thereby, potentially providing an early alert mechanism for potential wellbeing issues, as opposed to monitoring students' wellbeing. For a discussion on the potential of learning analytics to support student wellbeing see (Ahern, 2018).

In addition to potentially being able to flag wellbeing or welfare issues, learning analytics applications in themselves can pose a risk to wellbeing. It is recognized that students have a range of emotive responses to dashboards and do not always respond in the most appropriate manner, with some students worrying unnecessarily (Bennett, 2018). Staff may not be prepared for these responses and, by providing an additional system and expecting usage it can add an additional workload burden to staff, harming their wellbeing.

Learning analytics in the United Kingdom moved from pilot systems to a full service provided by Jisc in Summer 2018 (Jisc, 2019). As this is now an offering to HEIs, and given the potential shortcomings mentioned above, the following two questions have gained further relevance and urgency: Has the #StepChange recommendation been incorporated into these applications? And: has any consideration been given to wellbeing in relation to the introduction and use of learning analytics?

STUDENT SUPPORT AND LEARNING ANALYTICS

Student Support

The nature and structure of student support can vary greatly amongst and within HEIs. Earwaker (1992, p. 95) identifies the need for HEIs to make strategic decisions about the nature of the support, including:

- Is the student support to be seen as preventative or as a cure?
- Is the HEI prepared to take initiatives or only respond to expressed needs?
- Is the support provision understood to be integral to the educational task, or ancillary to it?

To understand if recommendation 2.5 has been included, we need to understand the nature of the student support provision provided by HEIs. This will provide a framework for analysing the nature of the support provided at study HEIs and whether or not there is alignment of the recommendation and current learning analytics (LA) implementations.

Student support is affected by perspectives of micro-politics including: the current focus of the HEI's energy and related discourse, the HEI's agenda, both public and private, and the position of student support in relation to access to resources. The levels within the institution can be considered as the Macro (whole institution), Meso (department or course/subject team) or Micro (individual academic) (Thomas et al., 2006). These will impact both policy development at the institution level and where the provision is provided and by whom, in addition to the nature of the provision itself at the individual department level.

In the United Kingdom HEIs are organized as a set of academic units (Schools) and central administrative units (Professional Services). Schools are further disaggregated into Faculties with associated Departments.

- For the purposes of this report an Advisor is defined as either a Personal Tutor/Faculty Advisor or a member of Professional Services staff who provide specialist advice and guidance to students for example, Careers Officers, Academic Support or Wellbeing Professionals. Advising, is defined as the activity undertaken by these staff members with regards to supporting students personally and academically.
- Models for delivering student support can be categorized as one of three organizational models: Centralized, Decentralized, or Shared (Pardee, 2004). However, these models do not specify the nature of the support nor who it is provided by.
- In the centralized model, all advisors are located in one academic or administrative unit. In contrast, for the decentralized model all advisors are located within their respective academic departments. In some institutions decentralized support is provided solely by a department advisor to whom the student is assigned. In the United Kingdom, this is usually an academic staff member from the student's discipline in the role of Personal Tutor. In the Shared model some advisors meet with students in a central administrative unit, while others meet in their academic department. This has also been referred to as the Hybrid professional model (Thomas et al., 2006). Most commonly seen within United Kingdom HEIs, is a combination of faculty based Personal Tutors and central Professional support.

Advising may be provided by a specific type or a combination of Professional, Faculty (academic staff) or Peer advisors (Migden, 1989). Not all advisor types are offered by all HEIs.

Professional Advisors

Professional advisors are professionally trained staff where the provision is centered around academic or welfare services and interaction is predicted on student need. Students will often see different advisors at different times depending on their particular needs at that time and the expertise of a particular advisor. This potentially limits the development of staff/student relationships as the majority of students are more likely to see a number of different specialists for different needs throughout their time at the institution (Thomas et al., 2006).

Faculty Advisors

- Faculty Advisors are members of teaching staff within an academic unit (usually within a faculty or department) who advise students. Their function can vary widely across and between institutions, and in the United Kingdom they are commonly associated with the role of Personal Tutor.

In this section we will discuss the student perception of Personal Tutors and the different types of support provided by Faculty Advisors; Academic, Pastoral and Developmental.

Students perceive the role of personal tutor as providing:

- Academic feedback and development,
- Information about processes, procedures, and expectations,
- Personal welfare support,
- Referral to further information and support,
- and developing their Relationship with the HEI and a sense of belonging (Thomas et al., 2006).

Although Academic, Pastoral, or Developmental support may be provided within the academic unit, an academic unit may provide only one or a combination of these types of support (Mynott, 2016). This can be at odds with students perceptions of what should be available.

- The aim of academic support is to support students to gain academic success and their desired qualification (Mynott, 2016). This may take place on a one-to-one basis or as part of a tutorial group. Where tutorials are integrated into the curriculum, students are required to attend a timetabled module with their tutor group. These sessions may incorporate learning skills with information about the institution and higher education more generally. As students are required to attend, it is assumed that all students potentially benefit, and the process enables relationships to develop between students, staff, and peers (Thomas et al., 2006). Some institutions have an academic support-only model in which staff are expected to immediately direct students to centralized services and trained counselor provision for any additional support needs (Smith, 2005).
- Pastoral support in the United Kingdom is often seen as responsive and reactive, centered around crisis intervention (Smith, 2005; Thomas et al., 2006). A specific staff member is assigned to each student and they may provide a combination of personal and academic support. Students are often required to arrange meetings and may only do so when they have a problem (Thomas et al., 2006). The support provided may be unstructured and may not meet the students' expectations or needs. Some approaches to this model are more pro-active with required meetings at regular intervals throughout the year and may be structured.
- Developmental support can include structured personal development planning and may include employability skills. Many aspects are discipline specific (Mynott, 2016).

Peer Advisors

Peer advising programs utilize undergraduate students to provide guidance, support, and referrals for other undergraduate students (Kuba, 2010). They are usually implemented in addition to existing advising provision.

There are a number of advantages to implementing a peer advisory service (Koring, 2005), these include:

- Versatility.
- Compatibility with pre-existing advising programs.
- Sensitivity to student needs.
- Ability to extend the range and scope of advising times and venues when advising is not usually available.

These are in addition to supporting key institutional priorities such as student retention and persistence, promotion of student success and helping students to meet their career goals (Zahorik, 2011). However, peer-led programs see a number of limitations, including difficulties for the advisors in balancing their advisor and student roles, a potential lack of objectivity regarding teaching staff and courses, a lack of knowledge of courses or programs of study, and a lack of student development theory (King, 1993).

However, programs such as Psychology Peer Advising (PPA) at James Madison University and the College of Natural Sciences Peer Advising at Michigan State University exemplify how these limitations can be resolved. In both these programs the student advisors undertake structured training and receive ongoing support/mentoring. For the PPA program, this involved the student advisors enrolling on a 2 credit class each semester. In addition to meeting with the students, the peer advisors also undertake additional tasks such as producing support materials (Koring, 2005; DuVall et al., 2018). It should be noted that these programs are quite involved and require levels of funding that may not be available to other institutions.

The literature notes (King, 1993; Koring, 2005; Kuba, 2010; Purdy, 2013) that there often are high levels of trust between peer mentors and their mentees and that these are easier to establish than between mentees and other advisor types. Therefore, it is important that the boundaries and limits of the role are clearly identified, and that training is provided in order for peer mentors to provide accurate information, constructive feedback, and to know when a mentee should be referred to specialist provision (Kuba, 2010). Peer advisors can be useful supplements to, but not a replacement for existing advisory systems.

Student Support and Data Usage

In order for Faculty and Professional advisors to provide timely and informed support to students they need to be provided with a wide range of data. This has resulted in the increase in the use of dashboards across the sector to present data from a range of sources such as the VLE and student record systems (Lochtie et al., 2018). In the United Kingdom it is common for Faculty Advisors not to teach their advisees, data are often used as the starting point for advisory meetings. However, as noted by Sclater (2017), this can add an additional workload to existingly over-stretched staff. Increasingly dashboards are the main user interface for learning analytics implementations.

Learning Analytics

Learning analytics are defined by The Society for Learning Analytics Research as "the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs" (Siemens and Gasevic, 2012).

In the United Kingdom, Jisc provide a national learning analytics service, this came into effect almost a year after the publication of the #StepChange report (Jisc, 2018). Almost all United Kingdom HEI implementations of learning analytics have been developed in partnership with Jisc in either an advisory or service provider capacity. The focus of these projects were learner analytics, developing models of learning engagement. With many of the pilot projects predominantly focusing on identifying at-risk students with regards to retention and progression.

Jisc, formally the Joint Information Systems Committee is a not-for-profit organization and is funded mainly by the United Kingdom government and universities. Pre-2012, Jisc was directly by the United Kingdom Higher Education Funding Councils. It was formed to provide networking and specialist information services to the United Kingdom post-16 education sector. It currently provides digital solutions and services to the United Kingdom Higher Education, Further Education and skills sectors (Who we are and what we do, 2020).

Development Frameworks

For the United Kingdom Post-16 sector, and as part of their initial pilot project work, Jisc developed their Learning Analytics Discovery Toolkit and a Discovery Readiness Questionnaire. These are part the onboarding process. The focus of the pilot projects and the Jisc Learning Analytics service has been on identifying students at academic risk, whether that be retention or underachievement.

In addition to the Jisc process, there has also been the Erasmus + funded SHEILA project focused on creating a policy development framework and the LA Deck project, a deck of cards for Learning Analytics co-design which was created by a doctoral researcher at the University of Technology Sydney (CIC Editor, 2019).

Jisc Onboarding Process

The Jisc onboarding process for the learning analytics consists of 5 steps. The steps are:

1. Orientation.
2. Discovery.
3. Culture and Organization Setup.
4. Data Integration.
   a. Live Data.
   b. Historical Data and predictive modeling.
5. Implementation roll-out/planning. (On-boarding Guide | Effective Learning Analytics, 2018).

The Discovery Toolkit and Discovery Questionaire form part of step 2 -Discovery, of this process. The toolkit has 5 stages of activity:

- Goals for learning analytics,
- Governance and leadership,
- Discovery questionnaire,
- Review areas that need development and create and action plan,
- And Start to address readiness recommendations.

The Discovery questionnaire focuses on 5 key areas and consists of 27 questions. The key areas are:

- Culture & Vision.
- Ethics and legal issues.
- Strategy & Investment.
- Structure & Governance.
- Technology & data.

Questions in the Culture & Vision section focus upon the aims of the implementation, management support and institutional buy-in.

The Jisc onboarding process will help institutions to understand their aims for and how to implement learning analytics, but they do not provide guidance on policy development.

Similarly, the LA-Deck cards focus on designing a learning analytics implementation but does not address policy. However, there are wild cards that could be used for this purpose if desired (Prietoalvarez, 2018).

Whereas in contrast, the aims of the SHEILA project (an Erasmus + funded program encompassing a team of 7 European universities and 58 associate partners) was to build a policy development framework that would assist European universities to become more mature users and custodians of data about their students as they learn online (About–SHEILA, 2018).

The SHEILA Framework

The SHEILA framework focuses on the development of learning analytics policies, the framework consists of 6 dimensions. These dimensions are:

1. Map political context.
2. Identify key stakeholders.
3. Identify desired behavior changes.
4. Develop engagement strategy.
5. Analyze internal capacity to effect change.
6. Establish monitoring and learning frameworks.

Each dimension has associated actions, challenges, and policy considerations (SHEILA-framework_Version-2.pdf, 2018). It was designed to be used as part of an iterative process. As the framework has been designed to aid the development learning analytics policy, the dimensions could also be used as a starting point to identify key features of existing learning analytics policies. If learning analytics is to be aligned to student wellbeing and mental health activities, the relevant stakeholders, e.g., student support teams, and expected outcomes should be identified as part of dimensions 2 and 3.

Implementations and Interventions

Current applications of learning analytics include early alert and student success (some of these applications focus on improving student outcomes (grades) whilst others focus on student retention and progression), course recommendation, adaptive learning, and curriculum design (Sclater, 2017). At present in the United Kingdom the focus is on early alert and student success, which may in part be due to the growing body of research investigating the relationship between student engagement and student outcomes.

Engagement can be charaterized in three ways: Behavioral, Emotional and Cognitive. Behavioral engagementis associated with participation with academic, social and extra-curricular activities. It is associated with students' academic success. Emotional engagement is associated with students' feelings about and responses to their educators and place of study. This is thought to impact on students' retention and willingness to study. Whereas, cognitive engagement is aligned to the idea of investment. The willingness to engage with cognitive complex tasks and ideas, exerting the extra effort required (Paris et al., 2016).

In context of learning analytics, student engagement refers to behavioral engagement. The recorded student interactions with the institution's systems and services e.g., VLE activity, attendance at a lecture and use of library services. Another partial factor may be the Higher Education Commission's recommendation that "all institutions should consider introducing an appropriate learning analytics system to improve student support and performance." (Shacklock, 2016, p. 4). However, there has been some recent debate about whether we are measuring engagement or attention. These are quite different things, and we need to be clear about much of what we are measuring. Much of the data that we use for measuring engagement, can be considered as a measure of attention, we know students have interacted with something but we do not know if they have engaged with it or to what extent. This should be taken into account when looking at the data captured by these systems and how we choose to use it (Thomson, 2019).

Much of the published research to date has focused on the development of learning analytics models and determining their potential usefulness in the context of teaching and learning, relatively little has been written about resulting interventions and their effectiveness with regard to student academic outcomes and changes in staff advising and student learning behaviors. The most recent review of learning analytics inventions in higher education (Wong and Li, 2019) reviews 24 case studies published between 2011 and 2018, 13 of which originated in the United States. Previous reviews of learning analytics interventions reviewed fewer articles, with 13 reviewed by Na and Tasir (2017) and of which 6 reported empirical intervention practices. Only 11 articles were found to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in the review by Sonderlund and Smith (2017). Of these 11 articles, only 2 were identified as having "Strong" Research Quality with regards to methodology. Overall the studies found that the interventions had a positive effect, however, some studies reported negative effects. These studies highlight the lack of quantity and quality of review of interventions undertaken as a result of learning analytics. With the limited evidence base for the effectiveness of current practice, should learning analytics be extended into more contentious or complex, with regards to modeling, areas? At present we risk a impacting a student negatively due to inadequate or inappropriate interventions, which may have welfare and wellbeing implications for the student. New analytics or more complex models should not be developed until there is a sound evidence base or the impact of these systems and the effectiveness of the associated interventions.

Visualizations of learner data are the most common form of intervention and are a key part of almost systems, but are still an active area of research in learning analytics and can have both positive and negative effects. Most visualizations, in the form of dashboards, are deployed to enable staff to find students at academic risk, obtain an overview of course activity and reflect on their teaching (Verbert et al., 2013).

Although it has been found that early dashboard usage by students is related to academic achievement later in the academic year (Broos et al., 2019), it is recognized that students have a range of emotive responses to dashboards and do not always respond in the most appropriate manner, with some students worrying unnecessarily (Bennett, 2018). In addition, aggregate data visualizations may over or underestimate the complex and dynamic underlying engagement of learners with different attitudes, behaviors and cognition (Rienties et al., 2017).

Research is currently being undertaken with regards to curriculum design (the design of programs of study or of individual modules from the view of increasing teaching effectiveness) and the intelligent campus within the United Kingdom, this is also an emerging theme within the international learning analytics research community as indicated by the theme "Capturing Learning and Teaching" listed in the 2020 Learning Analytics and Knowledge conference call for papers (10th International Learning Analytics and Knowledge (Lak) Conference, 2019). The intelligent campus is "where data from the physical, digital and online environments can be combined and analyzed, opening up vast possibilities for more effective use of learning and non-learning spaces" (Owen, 2018) by staff and students. It is envisioned that learning environments will be optimized for student engagement e.g., temperature and lighting and that resource usage and allocation will be adjusted to reduce waste and improve timetabling.

Much like student support, the nature and purpose of learning analytics implementations varies between institutions. These are impacted upon by the political context of the implementation and institutions' capacity to effect change.

Learning Analytics and Student Wellbeing

The mental health and wellbeing of young people is an increasingly important topic with regard to United Kingdom government policy. This has included the formation of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce which produced a number of reports and recommendations (Improving mental health services for young people–GOV.UK, 2015). There have since been a number of studies undertaken relating to mental health in schools and colleges (Supporting mental health in schools and colleges, 2018). In 2016 UUK adopted mental health as a proactive policy priority leading to the publication of the #StepChange framework in 2017 which is currently under review. December 2019 saw the launch the initial version of the University Mental Health Charter (Student Minds, 2019), a collaboration between UUK and the charity Student Minds.

As reported by Wong and Li (2019), students' behavioral data, online learning, and study performance were amongst the most commonly used data sources along with demographic data. It is the behavioral data that is of interest regarding student wellbeing.

In 2018, Jisc published a report on the opportunities presented by learning analytics to support student wellbeing and mental health (Hall, 2018). The report predominantly focused on students with poor attainment and/or engagement, it failed to address potential issues with well performing and/or highly engaged students that may be at risk from burnout or maladjusted perfectionism. However, the report does identify the need for a broader range of data sources and the need for a whole university approach. This has started to become an area of active learning analytics research in the United Kingdom, and in November 2018 Universities United Kingdom hosted the roundtable meeting Mental health in higher education: Data analytics for student mental health.

In addition, the recently published update to the StepChange framework, Stepchange: Mentally Healthy Universities, notes that "Universities are extending learning or staff analytics to identify difficulties or encourage positive behaviors" (Universities UK, 2020).

As reflected in the WHO definition of mental health: "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." (Saxena and Setoya, 2014, p. 6), wellbeing is multi-faceted and is best considered over multiple domains (Kern et al., 2015).

An example of this from the field of positive psychology, the scientific study of human flourishing – the strengths and virtues that enable us to thrive, is Seligman's PERMA model of flourishing (Seligman, 2012):

- P: Positive Emotions – feeling good.
- E: Engagement – psychological connection to activities and organizations.
- R: Relationships – feeling socially integrated.
- M: Meaning – purposeful existence.
- A: Achievement – a sense of accomplishment.

Although individuals may have differing levels of wellbeing for each dimension, they are interrelated. To thrive, and to meet the WHO definition of mental health, it is important to have a good level of wellbeing in each of the dimensions.

By considering and identifying the level of wellbeing in each of these dimensions HEIs could better meet the ongoing and changing wellbeing needs of the their student population. Aligning with the idea of positive education, education for both traditional skills and for happiness (Seligman et al., 2009; Kern et al., 2015). This aligns to recommendation in the updated Stepchange framework that institutions "review the design and delivery of the curriculum, teaching and learning to position health gain alongside learning gain" (Universities UK, 2020, pg 14)

Returning to the 2017 #StepChange recommendation: "Institutions are encouraged to align learning analytics to the mental health agenda to identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support." (Universities UK, 2017), given the complexities of human wellbeing, how appropriate are learning analytics applications for identifying difficulties? Are they able to provide actionable insights?

As previously noted, one of the main data sources for learning analytics applications is behavioral data. The field of Applied Behavior Analysis defines behavior as anything an individual does when interacting with the physical environment. Behavior influenced by environmental factors, important factors include:

- the context in which the response occurs,
- motivational factors,
- antecedents that signal which responses will be successful,
- and the consequences or outcomes of responses that influence whether they will recur in the future (Fisher et al., 2013).

Although students may be demonstrating the same behaviors, e.g., undertaking an online quiz, through their interactions with university systems such as virtual learning environments, there may be widely varying factors influencing why they have done so e.g., for revision, is a required activity, want to improve mark etc. This has implications for any models developed from the data. There needs to be an understanding of the students and their situation for a meaningful analysis and the analyze and handling of any identified gaps in the data, as opposed to blindly throwing data into a statistical model (Shaffer, 2017; Leitner et al., 2019). This calls into question of validity of existing learning analytics data sources, not just from a wellbeing perspective, but also as a measure of learner engagement (Leitner et al., 2019).

Given that the validity of existing learning analytics data sources is questionable, more expansive and granular data sources would be required to understand the motives behind the student behaviors. As wellbeing is multi-dimensional for learning analytics to be more effective in identifying wellbeing related changes in student behaviors it is likely that more intrusive data capture methods would be required.

As identified in studies focusing on identification of epistemic emotions, the emotions related to the cognitive processing of information and tasks that students encounter in a learning environment. Detection methods for epistemic emotions may include:

- asking students to self-report feelings,
- measuring physiological changes,
- and students' behavioral expressions (Arguel et al., 2019).

In addition, social network analysis of discussion forum interactions within online learning environments has been identified as a method of identifying potentially isolated students (Dawson, 2010). However, this is only a small part of how students interact, and to have a more representative picture, we would need to incorporate more data sources.

At what point do these methods step beyond what is acceptable and are perceived as forms of needless surveillance? A study from the Open University scanning their implementation of Predictive Learning Analytics over a 4-year period highlighted the limited usage of the system and a number of challenges. The highest level of engagement, 56.5%, was from the Faculty of Business and Law. Most staff access to the service was linked to assignment submission deadlines and students who were "silent" or raising concerns, this usage limited opportunities to potentially identify issues related to students who were doing well or present on the system and the potential usefulness of the system. Challenges included difficulties in interpreting the data presented, introducing additional burden onto staff. Would academic staff who are already uncomfortable in their role as personal tutors engage with a system that could potential expose student wellbeing issues? Or should access be limited to already stretched student wellbeing services?

In addition, as some groups of students are more likely to experience mental ill-health or poor wellbeing than others, do we risk stigmatizing these students through this monitoring and and interventions that are put into place? As argued by Prinsloo and Slade (2017) it is therefore important that an ethics of justice and care is developed transparently and in conjunction with all stakeholders (Herodotou et al., 2020). This is particularly important as most interventions and innovations lead to unexpected and potentially negative consequences (Rienties et al., 2017; Bennett, 2018).

Summary

From the literature it has been identified that there is a lot of variety in the student support landscape with regard to the structure and nature of support given to students. There is more homogeny in the United Kingdom's approach to learning analytics with a focus on early alert and student success, but there will be divergence in the nature of the implementations and associated interventions.

These implementations and interventions will impact upon institutions student support models as they inform who has access to the learning analytics system and for what purpose.

The complex nature of both learning and wellbeing have questioned the validity of current data sources used in learning analytics, with many questions being raised around the recommendation of using learning analytics tools to identify changes in student behavior related to wellbeing. However, as identified the very use of these tools can impact the behaviors and wellbeing of both staff and students. It is therefore important to consider if and to what extent this has been taken into consideration and features in the associated policies.

The rest of this paper will aim to identify firstly, to what extent if any has the 2017 #StepChange recommendation "Institutions are encouraged to align learning analytics to the mental health agenda to identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support." (Universities UK, 2017) been met. Secondly, as we have identified the use of these tools can impact the behaviors and wellbeing of staff and suggests we will identify to what if any extent this has been taken into account in the development of both student support and learning analytics policies.

METHODOLOGY

This project identifies the current nature and purpose of student support and learning analytics implementations, as well as any synergies or conflicts between these two systems. The aim is to establish if and how the two systems can be aligned to better support student wellbeing and mental health, as recommended in the UUK #StepChange report. A qualitative approach was undertaken. This includes a thematic analysis of student support and learning analytics policy documents.

using NVivo and an online survey that was designed to capture information about data usage in the student support process. These were conducted during the academic year 2018/19.

In addition to there being variation between student support implementations between institutions, there is also variance within. For the purposes of this work I focused on policies at the macro, institutional level, to develop an understanding of service implementation.

United Kingdom Higher Education Institutions were invited to participate in the study via a combination of an open call for participants that was advertised via a blog post, mailing lists and tweets, and targeted emails to institutions that were known to have an interest in learning analytics via their involvement with the Jisc Learning Analytics Network (as either host or presenting HEIs). Details of the recruitment process can be viewed in **Supplementary Appendix A**.

All participating institutions were required to complete a registration form and were recruited between December 2018 and February 2019. Seven English HEIs registered to take part in the study, four of which have a learning analytics implementation which are predominantly used to support students' academic development (see **Table 1**).

Student Support Policies

The analysis of student support policies was conducted as a thematic analysis, using the qualitative data analysis computer software package NVivo 11. A top-down approach was taken, by which pre-identified initial themes from the literature review were used to define the initial nodes and sub-nodes for the analysis. The list of nodes and sub-nodes can be viewed in **Supplementary Appendix B**.

During the analysis the researcher recognized that the pre-defined themes used for analysing the student support and wellbeing policies were based on a review of predominantly personal tutoring literature. As a result, these may not be suitable for all the policy documents. Having included a broader range of student support literature including academic and wellbeing causes for concern and support mechanisms for students with disabilities would have helped to provide a broader theoretical grounding for the analysis, enabling all the policies to be analyzed effectively.

Some additional nodes were added to capture additional information that was considered important e.g., referral to an additional policy/process. The final list of nodes and sub-nodes used for coding can be viewed in the **Supplementary Appendix B**. Each HEI was considered as a case for the purposes of the analysis with the following recorded for each institution: Name, Type and Focus.

The primary aims of this analysis were to:

- Identify the support model used;
- Identify is student support was reactive or pro-active;

TABLE 1 | Type and focus of participating institutions.

Institution type and focus	Pre 92	Post 92	Alternative provider
Teaching intensive	0	4	1
Research intensive	1	0	0
Neither	0	1	0

- and what form the support undertook –
  - The types of advisor,
  - The primary type of advising.

Additionally, each policy document was reviewed outside of NVivo to identify specific staff roles, services, outside agencies and other policies explicitly referenced. The purpose of this activity was to identify any relationships between the student support policies and where applicable, learning analytics policies. A full list of the shared policies can be viewed in **Supplementary Appendix B**.

Learning Analytics Policies

Not all of the institutions in the study have learning analytics implementations. There are fewer policies developed for learning analytics compared to student support where there is usually a suite of associated policies. However, learning analytics policies could be considered as part of the suite of student support policies where the implementation is to form part of the personal tutor support. As there were notably fewer learning analytics policy documents than student support policies it was decided that a thematic analysis would not be conducted for these documents.

Like the student support policies each learning analytics policy document was reviewed to identify specific staff roles, services, outside agencies and other policies explicitly referenced. The purpose of this activity was to identify any relationships between these policies and the student support policies.

As the SHEILA framework is designed to aid the development of learning analytics policies, I thought this would be a good starting point for analysing the policies. Effectively using the framework prompts to reverse engineer the policy documents. To devise key questions for reviewing the learning analytics policies prompts from the SHEILA framework (SHEILA-framework_Version-2.pdf, 2018), taken from the dimensions 2 (Identify key stakeholders), 3 (Identify desired behavior changes) and 6 (Establish monitoring and learning frameworks), were used.

These dimensions were selected as their Action prompts were the most relevant to the policy analysis tasks. The prompts were:

- Dimension 2: Write down the people that will need to be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation phases.
- Dimension 3: Write down the changes that you would like learning analytics to bring to your institutional environment or particular stakeholders. Why are these changes important to your institution?
- Dimension 6: Define success indicators and consider both qualitative and quantitative measurements.

These prompts were adapted and the key questions developed were:

- What is the stated purpose of the analytics implementation?
- Whose behaviors have been identified as the focus?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Is success defined, if so, how?

Additional policy documents were identified on the websites of the participatory institutions to address some of these questions.

Online Survey

Analysis of student support policies identified that at least one policy from each of the participating institutions included the term "monitoring" and for 6 of the institutions at least one policy contained the term "data." However, it is not clear from these policies what the data is or how it is used. As only 4 of the participating institutions have a learning analytics implementation it was determined that a survey would be developed to help develop an understanding of this data usage.

An online survey was designed and distributed to capture if and what data was being used by personal tutors and student support services, how it was obtained, if it was shared and who it was shared with. For the institutions with learning analytics implementations it was hoped that this would provide a greater insight into how they are used to support students, by whom and for what purposes. The survey contained a combination of closed and open questions.

A link to the survey was sent via email invitation to the contact identified via the registration process. A generic invitation was initially sent, followed by a repeat invitation 20 days later. A reminder was sent a further 13 days later.

Six responses were recorded for the survey, however, it was only completed by 3 institutions.

ANALYSIS – POLICIES

The #StepChange framework recommendation 2.5 states that "Institutions are encouraged to align learning analytics to the mental health agenda to identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support." (Universities UK, 2017). A key finding from analysing the policies shared with this research project from the participating Higher Education Institutions is that there are three elements to student support and wellbeing, each with different institutional behaviors. These elements are day-to-day support, wellbeing cause for concern and academic cause for concern. For the purposes of this report day-to-day support refers to the routine support available to all students such as Personal Tutor sessions and Careers advice. Where a student is at risk of academic failure, an academic cause for concern process may be triggered. Wellbeing cause for concern processes may be triggered if a student is presenting behaviors that may result in a threat to their health or the wellbeing of others e.g., symptoms of mental ill-health or substance abuse. If the #StepChange recommendation has been or is starting to be adopted, then you would expect to find learning analytics referred to in the corresponding policies for the purpose of enhancing student wellbeing and mental health provision.

Day-to-Day Support

Personal tutoring is part of the day-to-day/routine support of students in HEIs. In the majority of the participating institutions this was provided by academic staff within faculties with specialist support being available centrally via professional staff. A hybrid model of student support. Only one institution had a dedicated tutoring team. These institutions and policies are given in **Table 2**.

The primary role of the tutors/advisers in these institutions is academic coaching and mentoring, however, they are also expected to provide pastoral support. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> *"The primary purpose of the Academic Adviser role is to proactively monitor a student's academic performance and to act as a named contact that a student can approach to discuss their academic, personal and professional development during their time studying at the university[1]."*

As there is an expectation of providing pastoral support, the personal tutor is often informed of student issues relating to their wellbeing or welfare. If learning analytics were being used to identify wellbeing concerns, staff in these roles would be expected to make initial contact with students (Ahern, 2018).

In some institutions, as illustrated below, there is more emphasis on the academic and professional development of students and tutors are encouraged to refer students to professional colleagues sooner rather than later. Having such an emphasis may deter staff and students from discussing pastoral concerns as these are immediately referred to professional colleagues (Smith, 2005). This is also an illustration of the hybrid professional model of student support.

> *"Tutors will work in partnership with their students to encourage academic and professional development and include consideration of a student's progress, including formative or summative assessment feedback, and where relevant, exam feedback in the summer, helping students understand their feedback and prepare for assessments or reassessments, or their transition into the next stage of their career. . . .. Tutors will refer students directly to central and specialist support services to ensure students receive the correct support as speedily as possible, for example, for support for mental health difficulties. If there is any doubt what the most appropriate service is, they will refer to the Student Support Officer for further guidance[2]."*

With regard to learning analytics, the terms "analytics" and "dashboard| only appear in the personal tutoring policy for one institution[3]. It specifies that "The . . . Student Dashboard is a resource designed to support tutorials. It contains important information useful for different points in the academic year. Where possible and appropriate, staff should use the resource (including recording notes and agreed actions)."

In addition to outlining the role of the tutor/adviser, a number of the policies also specify student responsibilities as tutees. These include notifying their tutor if they are experiencing any academic, health or personal problems that are affecting their academic work and actively engage with any additional support services[4].

Four of the participating institutions specify a minimum number of meetings between tutors and tutees in an academic year, with some additionally specifying how many of these should be face-to-face. For the majority of sessions, there is no specification of the format or scheduling for these meetings, it is for individual departments to decide.

> *"Each student will have a timetabled meeting with their tutor within 3 weeks of the start of study (whether 1-1 or in a small group tutorial), with attendance recorded[5]."*

As shown below, the requirements can vary dependent on the students' stage of study.

"• *First Years.*
  - *Students are given the name of their personal tutor (and Subject Advice Tutor where relevant), with whom they will meet during the first week.*
  - *Students should normally meet with their personal tutors on four occasions during the year.*

- *For subsequent undergraduate years:*
  - *Students should normally engage with their tutors on three occasions in each year[6]."*

However, at the institution with a dedicated tutoring team; students have timetabled group tutorials, are able to book one-to-one tutorials with their tutor or attend a Personal Tutor Drop-In session, similar to office hours offered at the other institutions.

Wellbeing Causes for Concern

In contrast to the day-to-day policies, policies pertaining to wellbeing or academic cause for concern outline specific protocols.

Causes for concern policies and processes are either wellbeing, including mental health, or academic focused. Wellbeing cause for concern processes are often linked to Fitness to Study/Practice policies and procedures.

Policies that fall into this category also include specific guidance relating to student mental health. Of the participating institutions, three shared policies explicitly related to student mental health. These institutions and policies are given in **Table 3**.

[1] 1001-02 section "Student Support and Learning Analytics" purpose of academic advising.

[2] 3-02 section "Learning Analytics" Academic and personal tutors.

[3] 1005-01.

[4] 1004-08, 1007-02, 1001-02.

[5] 3-02.

[6] 1007-02.

TABLE 2 | Institutions and day-to-day support policies.

Institution	Policies
1001	Academic advice framework
1002	Personal tutor handbook
1003	Student support framework
1004	Personal tutoring policy
1005	Quality handbook – section "Analysis – Data Usage" personal tutoring
1007	Code of practice for the personal tutoring of all taught students

TABLE 3 | Institutions and cause for wellbeing concern policies.

Institution	Policies
1001	Student mental health policy and procedure
	Confidentiality and information sharing policy
1003	GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON SUPPORTING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES
1006	Student mental health policy
	Guidelines and procedures for staff working with students who have mental health difficulties.
	Guidelines for prospective and current students experiencing mental health difficulties

Additionally, institutions 1004 and 1007 shared policies related to students with disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Participating institution 1004, shared two additional policies:

- Students Giving Cause for Concern,
- Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure.

The second policy is of a similar nature to policies from 1002 (Study and Wellbeing Review Policy and Procedures) and 1007 (Support to Study Policy). All three policies present a clear procedure related to 3 levels of concern. Required actions and timelines for each level are specified in addition to possible outcomes and any conditions for automatic escalation.

Academic Causes for Concern

Institutions 1003 and 1007 shared policies relating to students considered to be at academic risk. These policies are enacted if a student does not engage with their program of study in the required manner.

The institution 1003 "Procedure for Students at Risk of Academic Failure" policy, 1003-04, is referenced explicitly in their learning analytics policy "Student Engagement Policy" where students have not met the engagement requirements specified. This is the only example of where a student support policy is referred to in the learning analytics policies analyzed. The procedure for Withdrawal of a Student by the university will be triggered as a result of evidence of one or more of the following:

- failure to attend lectures and/or other timetabled elements of a course;
- failure to submit work for formative or summative assessment;
- failure to engage in other way with the requirements of a course (e.g., through Moodle).
- Referral from Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study Policy.

Institution 1007 is not currently engaged with learning analytics.

Where data is mentioned in these policies it is in regard to Data Protection regulations and the sharing of data with relevant agencies to facilitate student support. Data is not mentioned in the context of identifying concerns related to wellbeing or mental health, therefore there is no evidence to indicate that the #StepChange framework recommendation 2.5 is currently being implemented.

ANALYSIS – DATA USAGE

With the exception of the personal tutoring policy of participating institution 1003 learning analytics and explicit data usage is not mentioned in any of the other student support and wellbeing policies analyzed by this project.

Three of the participating institutions completed the online survey related to data sharing and usage. A response rate of 42.9%. Of these, 2 have an institutional learning analytics service. The institutions that completed the survey were 1001, 1005, and 1006, all of which are Post 92 and Teaching Intensive.

Outcomes of the survey show that for all institutions, academic/personal tutors use data to inform their tutoring. A range of data is used and is made available to tutors via a variety of methods (see **Table 4**).

Where surveyed institutions had an institutional learning analytics service tutors were required to make use of the service and received training on how to interpret the data provided. Additionally, in these institutions student support services also had access to the learning analytics service. Other roles also had access to the service (see **Table 5**).

In addition, at the three institutions that completed the survey, data is shared between tutors and student support services. However, this tends to be from the tutor to student support services. Data related to interactions with student support services are only shared with tutors with student permission. At institution 1005, staff can refer students to student support services via the learning analytics service with the student's consent. A confirmatory note will be left in the service for the tutor if student support services have successfully contacted the student. Full survey results can be seen in **Supplementary Appendix C**.

Although a lot of data is available to academic/personal tutors this is primarily data relating to the students' academic performance and demographics available via the institution's student information system. Unless a student states that they are seeking support or agree for the data relating to student support services visits to be shared the academic/personal tutor will be unaware. There is a tension between protecting students' privacy and providing effective support. Without data sharing it may be difficult for tutors to know if a student is having any non-academic related difficulties or difficulties that may be affecting their academic performance. As a result, guidance may be given or discussions had that impact negatively on a student's wellbeing or mental health. For instance a tutor may discuss concerns around academic performance with a student not knowing they are suffering from anxiety issues and exacerbate the anxiety or be unaware of financial concerns and insist that a student attends a meeting or lecture that requires travel at peak times.

Learning Analytics

Of the participating institutions, four currently having a learning analytics implementation and associated policy(ies). Analysis

TABLE 4 | Frequency table – Q4: How is this data made available to tutors?

Choices	Absolute frequency	Cum. absolute frequency	Relative frequency by choice	Relative frequency	Cum. relative frequency	Adjusted relative frequency	Cum. adjusted relative frequency
Via a learning analytics service	2	2	20%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%
Via various institutional systems e.g., VLE, SIS etc.	3	5	30%	100%	166.67%	100%	166.67%
Via an academic support system	1	6	10%	33.33%	200%	33.33%	200%
Via a case management systems	1	7	10%	33.33%	233.33%	33.33%	233.33%
Personal records of meetings	2	9	20%	66.67%	300%	66.67%	300%
Other	1	10	10%	33.33%	333.33%	33.33%	333.33%
Sum:	10	–	100%	–	–	–	–
Not answered:	0	–	–	0%	–	–	–

TABLE 5 | Q9: What other roles make use of the service.

Institution	Additional roles using the analytics service
1005	Academic teaching staff/administrators, academic librarians, employability team, academic registry
1006	Module leaders, program leaders, tutors in student support services

of the policies shared and those publicly available against the SHEILA framework-based questions found that for all of the institutions, the aims of the service are to enhance student retention and attainment (see **Table 6**: Overview analysis of learning analytics).

The majority of these systems primarily focus on identifying students with low engagement who may be at risk of withdrawing early.

"8.1 The purpose of learning analytics at . . . is to:

> *a. enhance student retention, by alerting staff and individual students when a student is potentially at risk of early withdrawal*[7]*."*
>
> *"The key driver for this is to support students to succeed by identifying at an early stage those who are starting to disengage with their studies*[8]*."*
>
> *"Our primary focus therefore in using such data is to support students in their personal learning journeys toward degree attainment, concurrently maintaining our reputation as a student-centered university*[9]*."*

One institution aims to use learning analytics to enhance teaching quality *"Academic teams can use analytics about student activity (individual or cohort) as part of course review and re-design processes as well as potentially using analytics as a form of in-course monitoring and feedback*[10]*."*

[7] 1005-01, section **Tables 1–6**.

[8] 3 https://www.celt.3.ac.uk/sem/index.php.

[9] 1006 – Using Student Engagement Data policy.

[10] 1004 – Learning Analytics Purpose https://www.gre.ac.uk/articles/planning-and-statistics/learning-analytics-purpose.

In addition, no mention is made of using learning analytics with regard to mental health in "identify change in students' behaviors and to address risks and target support." (Universities UK, 2017). For the institutions participating in this study the main focus is on supporting students' academic success. Student academic success is defined as completing their course of study and/or obtaining a good degree outcome (Upper Second Class or higher).

The Institutional learning analytics policies reviewed rarely reference their student support and wellbeing policies. Many of these policies have direct references to data collection notices, academic regulations and Tier 4 compliance policies. The policy from 1005 mentions their "Policy for crisis intervention – students causing concern/students at risk," however, no link is provided to it. In addition to referencing their policy, "Procedures for students at risk of academic failure," 1003 also reference their "Exceptional Factors form" in their learning analytics policy.

A majority of these systems focus on low behavioral engagement as this has been associated with a risk of academic cause for concern, but the focus on low behavioral engagement is also particularly important for students with a known mental health condition. It should also be noted that poor attendance may be an indicator of low emotional engagement with the HEI. Nottingham Trent University (NTU) have found that 19% more students with a known mental health condition if their engagement is Low (28%), compared to those with whose engagement is Good/High (9%). NTU also found that students with a known mental health condition were more likely to have 14 day non-engagement alerts (7%), than their peers without a declared disability (4%) (Foster, 2019).

However, low behavioral engagement (low levels of interaction with an institution's systems and services) should not be our only concern with regards to student wellbeing and welfare. From the information available about these systems it is unclear if over or unhelpful engagement can be identified. These are important to identify as some students may be prone to overwork. Some may be over-engaging and high achieving; will others may be over-engaging and have low or average achievement.

TABLE 6 | Overview analysis of learning analytics.

HEI	What is the stated purpose of the analytics implementation?	Whose behaviors have been identified as the focus?	Who are the stakeholders?	Is success defined, if so, how?
1003	To support students to succeed by identifying at an early stage those who are starting to disengage with their studies. Contributes to the University's long-term strategy and goals by supporting retention and progression	Students'.	Staff and students.	Information not available in shared documents.
1004	Improve progression and retention and to evaluate and demonstrate institutional efficiency. Additionally, it can be used as a form of feedback on the efficacy of pedagogical design.	Students'.	Staff and students.	Information not available in shared documents.
1005	A resource designed to support tutorials, it has been developed to help students engage more effectively with their studies.	Students'.	Staff and students.	Information not available in shared documents.
1006	Retention and Success, enabling more students to fulfill their potential.	Students'.	Staff and students.	Information not available in shared documents.

The PISA 2015 (OECD, 2017) survey found that 15yr olds in the United Kingdom reported that 95% of the students surveyed wanted to achieve top grades in all or most of their classes, with 76% wanting to be one of the best students in their class, and 90% wanting to be the best whatever they do. This motivation is, however, coupled with school-work related anxiety. Fifty two percent of the surveyed students agreed that they get very tense when they study, with 72% feeling very anxious even if they are well prepared for a test. These concerns have been found to be reflected in the HEI student population. Study was found to be the primary cause of stress among students, this is coupled with pressure to find a high-class degree as "Finding a job after university" is the second highest cause of stress reported by students (Not by Degrees, 2017).

An example of study stress and over-engagement was highlighted in the BBC 3 documentary Death on Campus (Byrne, 2017) where a state school pupil had obtained a place at Oxford University. Said student was struggling, and had started to work all night on a regular basis just to keep up. Sadly, the student hadn't sought help and took their own life.

In addition to the volume of engagement, it is additionally important to aware of what students are engaging with, analysis I have previously undertaken of student VLE interaction data highlighted the repeated taking of a formative quiz and was negative correlated with outcome.

Additionally, some engagement may be due to factors other than teaching and learning purposes. These could be welfare related, for example, students who overnight in the library may be doing so as there may have issues with their accommodation or have become homeless.

Although the data used in these learning analytics systems is behavioral data, it is unclear from the information provided by the institutions as to the granularity of the data provided and if it is sufficient to identify behavior changes other than broad changes in engagement. Behavior changes are a known signifier of changes in wellbeing, it therefore important to be able to identify changes in an individual's behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study draws two main conclusions from the documents that have been reviewed, firstly, there appears to be very little integration of learning analytics and student support and wellbeing. Secondly, there is an overlap of the staff roles and departments involved in the implementation of both sets of policies.

Where there are direct connections between policies these are between academic tutoring and learning analytics, driven by the institutional student retention and success policies. However, a recent systematic review has raised concerns about the efficacy of the systems and their lack of grounding in educational research. It also identifies issues with staff and student interpretation of the date presented (Matcha et al., 2020). At present there is little consideration in these policies of the role for learning analytics could play in supporting students wellbeing and mental health.

If learning analytics and student support and wellbeing are to be aligned as recommended in the 2017 #StepChange report, this should be taken into consideration at the system development stage. There will be differing data requirements and granularity than that currently provided. There would also need to be clear expectations and guidance on how often the system should be accessed and how to respond to the data presented. This could potentially be at more regular intervals than at present for many users of these systems.

Although there is the potential for the alignment of learning analytics and student wellbeing, there are a number of ethical and data collection issues that first need to be addressed. At present it seems that the institutional policies and learning analytics systems in place are not currently sufficiently aligned for this to become a reality.

In addition, there is no consideration seemingly given for the potential impact of learning analytics on both staff and student wellbeing. As both the updated Stepchange framework and the University Mental Health Charter call for a whole university approach to wellbeing this needs to be addressed going forwards.

FURTHER WORK

There are limitations to this work as it was a very small study and information used was extracted from institutional policy documents. It is acknowledged that these documents may not represent what happens in practice, and may omit details of systems and practices. Many of the policies analyzed were published before the publication of the #StepChange framework.

As learning analytics implementations are predominantly designed for use by those supporting students there is need to connect the literature on advising and tutoring with any research into the impacts of learning analytics on student behavior. In terms of both learning behaviors and welfare (wellbeing and mental health). At present the design of interventions such as dashboards does not seem to have a grounding in this literature.

Next steps for this work would be to review existing learning analytics systems to identify whether or not the granularity of the data provided is sufficient to identify behavior changes other than broad changes in engagement. It would also be beneficial to interview staff using these systems to identify what they are looking for in the data and how they would feel about using this data for student wellbeing purposes.

Additionally, further research is required into the impact on staff and student mental health of current learning analytics implementations as this does not appear to have been considered in the policies reviewed.

The recommendation for and research into the alignment of learning analytics with student support and wellbeing with regards to mental health is a United Kingdom specific phenomenon. However, any lessons learned with regard to wellbeing and mental health impacts for staff and students occurring as a result of a learning analytics system being implemented are important for the wider global learning analytics user community.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data generated from complete survey responses is available in the **Supplementary Material**. The qualitative data has not been shared as this would identify the participating institutions, some of whom wished to remain anonymous.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

SA was solely responsible for all elements of the research and production of the corresponding manuscript.

FUNDING

This research was funded as part of the SA's daily work, no additional funding was received.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was mentored by the United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring Research Committee. I would also like to extend thanks to Dr. Steve Rowett and Ms. Joanna Stroud for their assistance in proofing and editing the text.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The Supplementary Material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.531424/full#supplementary-material

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

frontiers in Education

ORIGINAL RESEARCH
published: 28 September 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00145

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Underestimating the Relationship Between Academic Advising and Attainment: A Case Study in Practice

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The Higher Education Academy (2015) highlighted attainment alongside access, retention and progression as key areas of foci in order to fulfill the aspiration to provide all students with the opportunities and support required to succeed in Higher Education (HE). Although previous research into academic advising has focused on the impact upon student satisfaction and retention, the impact upon attainment is underexplored. This research aims to explore the extent of the relationship between advising and attainment and answers the call by bodies such as Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy) to recognize that academic advising is vital to student success. This research provides a contribution to the body of knowledge around academic advising, in the form of a case study undertaken to identify the impact of academic advising on student attainment at Sheffield Hallam University. A focus group and questionnaire were employed to gather data from final year undergraduate students at Sheffield Hallam University. Findings indicate that the impact of academic advising on attainment is both explicit and implicit, with support in areas beyond academic studies having a significant impact on student experiences. In addition this research also questions the perceived meanings of attainment in HE and proposes that attainment should be viewed as holistic attainment whereby students are developed as a whole, better enabling them to deal with the HE environment and beyond rather than being limited to academic numerical attainment.

Keywords: advising, attainment, tutoring, success, achievement, higher education

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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *01 February 2020*
Accepted: *21 July 2020*
Published: *28 September 2020*

Citation:
Holland C, Westwood C and Hanif N (2020) Underestimating the Relationship Between Academic Advising and Attainment: A Case Study in Practice. Front. Educ. 5:145. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.00145

INTRODUCTION: THE CHANGING HE ENVIRONMENT

Advising and tutoring have long been seen as critical to student success, persistence and retention (Drake, 2011). However, the impact of academic advising on attainment, has often been overshadowed by a focus on the process and models of advising and student satisfaction rather than the wider impact that it can have (Light, 2001; Hemwall and Trachte, 2005; Propp and Rhodes, 2006; Campbell and Nutt, 2008).

Alongside this the Higher Education (HE) environment is changing. Societal shifts toward a consumer led society are resulting in some students behaving as consumers and equally, some universities perceiving students as consumers (Woodall et al., 2014). Impacts include the marketization and massification of HE (Molesworth et al., 2011; Tight, 2017) with universities focusing on student attainment The Higher Education Academy (2015) and employability (Kalfa and Taksa, 2015) in order to satisfy student aspirations and expectations. With this, many HE institutions (HEIs) are reviewing their approach and model of advising, viewing a personalized approach to learning and support as critical to the success of the student and overall strategy of the university. Sheffield Hallam University has undertaken a number of reviews of academic advising from 2015 to present with an increasing emphasis on the value of academic advising. As strategic emphasis grows, this case study aims to give an insight into the extent of the relationship between advising and attainment and identify the critical success factors in achieving high quality and effective advising.

A case study of the advising approach being implemented by Sheffield Business School at Sheffield Hallam University shall be utilized. This will facilitate an examination of the features of academic advising delivery and the impact upon student attainment. Research was undertaken with final year undergraduate students in Sheffield Business School in an attempt to understand the student perspective on the role of advising and attainment.

Models of Advising

Academic Advising implies a singular purpose, to advise students on academic matters, yet descriptions of multiple definitions extend the role beyond this. Gordon et al. (2008, p524) define academic advising as:

> *"a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes."*

In essence good advising should help students understand the HE environment in which they are operating and aid identification of skills to enable them to manage their own learning and future aspirations. Cuseo (n.d.) supports these assertions by defining an academic advisor as the individual who:

> *"helps students become more self-aware of their distinctive interests, talents, values, and priorities; who enables students to see the 'connection' between their present academic experience and their future life plans; who helps students discover their potential, purpose, and passion; who broadens students' perspectives with respect to their personal life choices, and sharpens their cognitive skills for making these choices, such as effective problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflective decision-making"* (Cuseo (n.d.), p15).

What is clear is that high quality advising goes well beyond support related to academic issues and has the potential to build social and emotional wellbeing, future employability and the development of a collegial working environment (Small, 2013). Similarly, Drake (2011) highlights the importance of advisers in not only guiding students through their academic journey but also in supporting decisions about their future careers. What emerges in this approach is the notion of advisors as what Strayhorn (2015) terms cultural navigators. These are individuals who are able to assist socialization into the HE environment, aid with the navigation of the HE maze including developing the academic skills and knowledge to succeed and guiding them to make thoughtful decisions about future careers (Drake, 2011).

Previous research into advising and tutoring has focused on a number of different strands and foci. Some research compares staff commitment to the role (Stephen et al., 2008), whilst others compare the position of the tutor in relation to curriculum and professional support services and advisors (Earwaker, 1992; Wheeler and Birtle, 1993; Laycock and Wisdom, 2009). Others have taken a historical perspective and traced the progression from the Oxbridge Tutor (Ashwin, 2005) to Personal Development Tutor (Strivens, 2006). The commonality here is a focus on the process of advising rather than the impact. One of the first models to draw links between institutional features such as academic advising and student outcomes was Tinto's (2007) model in which Tinto identified the relationship between the HEI and the student as a defining factor in student achievement. Habley (2004) clarifies this further by stating that academic advising is one area that institutions can utilize to formalize and integrate quality exchanges between students and the academic environment.

The formalization of academic advising manifests in a number of ways, from prescriptive advising in which the emphasis of responsibility falls on the advisor to developmental advising where there is a focus on the student's needs as a whole (Earl, 1988). A middle ground can be seen with Glennen's (1976) Proactive Advising in which Glennan sought to blend advising and counseling through the preemptive provision of information before students requested it whilst also developing relationships with students. Practice within the case study of Sheffield Business School has predominantly been a professional services model (Earwaker, 1992), with Academic and Professional Advising seen as external to the curriculum in line with Glennen's's (1976) Intrusive Advising model in which tutors initiate contact with students at critical points throughout their time at university. Perhaps reflective of the changing nature of HE, the 2017/2018 academic year saw development toward a more integrated approach with advising incorporated into the curriculum through a strand in employability focused modules at each level.

Advising and Attainment

Attainment is defined as "cumulative achievements in HE and level of degree-class award" which are enabled through data driven practice, engendering high student expectations and promoting peer led learning (The Higher Education Academy, 2015). Similarly, Office for Students (2020) defines attainment as the HE outcomes achieved by students, such as the classes of degree awarded. Although in the advising literature, the term "student success" could be linked to attainment, it is often discussed in relation to retention and progression rather than academic attainment (Yorke and Longden, 2004). As such there is limited connection between the two concepts of advising and attainment, with only an inference of a connection in The Higher Education Academy report (2015, p1):

> *Students' sense of belonging, partnership and inclusion are essential for achieving these aims, requiring a culture which promotes and enables the full and equitable participation of all students in HE.*

So far the literature on advising has highlighted the importance of academic advising in facilitating exchanges between the academic environment and students and identified the role that good advising plays in relation to understanding the HE environment, facilitation of skill identification and future employability support but what are the impacts of these interactions on attainment? A review of the current literature highlights limited knowledge of the impact of advising on attainment. To date, the literature has focused on three key streams in relation to advising impact: student success, persistence and retention (Drake, 2011).

The empirical research of Hawthorne and Young (2010) found that satisfaction with advisors and support provided by the institution significantly influenced satisfaction with the educational environment and in turn impacted upon student intentions to persist and complete their educational qualifications. These findings were replicated in Shelton's (2003) study whereby a direct correlation between perceived level of support and retention and success was recognized. Unpicking this further, Young-Jones et al. (2013) identified that the perceived level of institutional support was influenced by the frequency of student and advisor support which led to higher student self-efficacy and study skill utilization. The idea of self-efficacy development is an interesting one which places ownership strongly with the student and indeed, NACADA defines advising as "a decision-making process during which students themselves reach their own academic potential through a communication and information exchange with an academic advisor" (Drake, 2011, p5).

Having examined four decades of research on student persistence, Drake (2011) identifies three critical interventions which ultimately link to both persistence and retention: connecting students to the institution early in their HE journey, a rigorous first year academic advising program which enables learning communities and solid academic advising. Within this there is consensus that the component parts of these interventions including supporting skill identification and skill building, the development of student self-efficacy, educating and socializing the student into the HE environment and the broadening of employability horizons (see Cuseo, n.d.; Shelton, 2003; Gordon et al., 2008; Drake, 2011), all impact upon student success (Young-Jones et al., 2013) which could by extension include attainment but such links have yet to be fully explored.

Various authors who discuss attainment view this as "educational" attainment and also more broadly refer to academic achievement linked with the process of progressing through all schooling levels (Bahr, 2008; Novo and Calixto, 2009). Other authors also discuss the development of "intellectual attainment" empowering the learning through critical understanding (Canaan, 2010) and Ning and Downing (2012) refer to attainment in terms of academic performance in which the student learning experience and environment are critical to success. More contemporary literature explores student attainment as complex and multifaceted by looking at how it is shaped by different, often competing, agendas and vested interests (Steventon et al., 2016). Yet limited literature suggests "how" and indeed if, academic advising has an impact on student attainment. So, whilst there is no question as to the imperative value of good quality academic advising; instead this research has been borne out of the institutional need to examine whether there is a correlation between academic advising and attainment.

METHODOLOGY

The Case Study: Context of Advising at Sheffield Business School

In recent years, Sheffield Hallam University has seen a number of iterations of academic advising as the value of advising has been increasingly recognized and the university has sought the most effective strategy. In 2015 the Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) Academic and Professional Advice Framework (2015) outlined three major strands to academic advising to be undertaken by academics in the role:

i. Pastoral support including social orientation.
ii. Academic advice including student academic development.
iii. Careers / placement support.

Yet, contrasting policies and practices were seen across the university generating inconsistencies in approaches. In Sheffield Business School (SBS), the focus of this study, the SBS Academic Advisor Role Guide (Sheffield Business School, 2017) outlined the focus of the role as supporting students with planning their personal development in relation to their academic and employability skills with the pastoral support of the SHU Academic and Professional Advice Framework (2015) notably absent. Following further review, the parameters of the academic advisor role at the time of the study had evolved once more to a focus on supporting students in relation to their academic studies (Sheffield Business School, 2017), with pastoral and employability support having been separated and assigned to professional services staff as Student Support Advisors and Employability Advisors. The exception to this model is that during the second year of student study, there is an additional focus on supporting students with their search for a work placement including the academic advisor acting as a referee and giving CV guidance.

Such an approach differs to the encompassing approach identified in the literature whereby academic advisor support, carried out by the academic, includes academic, pastoral, and employability support (see Cuseo (n.d.) and Gordon et al., 2008). This case study aims to understand the impact of the splitting up of the traditional advising role elements and explore whether there is a correlation between academic advising and attainment. The research was undertaken by two academics in the department of Service Sector Management and an independently recruited student Research Assistant (RA) from another faculty in the university as part of a university funded pedagogic project into the role of academic advising and attainment.

Participants

This study has focused on seven final year undergraduate students studying in the Service Sector Management Department within Sheffield Business School at Sheffield Hallam University. Final year students were chosen based on their length of time at the university and their experience of academic advising as recipients. Furthermore, the third year of university is typically the most academically intensive for them; focusing on final year students also allowed the study to consider academic attainment at earlier levels alongside their final classification.

The students were recruited through the university's virtual learning environment platform to enable access to final year students across the department. Self-selecting sampling was applied for this project as the students identified themselves as willing to take part in the research (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Saunders and Lewis, 2012). This is a highly effective method of non-probability sampling due to the relevancy of the cases (individuals); the participants are committed to the research and overall, this method reduces the recruitment process (Veal, 2011). There are limitations which were taken into consideration, such as the inherent bias the participants may have, as they want to "voice" their views on the research topic which could lead to the sample not being a true representation of the research population. This study involving human participants was reviewed and approved by Sheffield Hallam University ethics panel. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study and for the publication of their verbatim quotations.

Research Methods

A focus group was selected as the main data collection method, to elicit a deeper understanding of the student's perceptions of academic advisors, a common and familiar topic amongst the student group (Denscombe, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2014). The main advantages of focus groups are: they are useful to obtain detailed information about personal and group feelings, perceptions and opinion; in addition they can save time compared to individual interviews, furthermore providing a broader range of information (Saunders and Lewis, 2012). That said a particular disadvantage of a focus group is the possibility that the members may not express their honest and personal opinions about the topic at hand (Matthews and Ross, 2010).

A set of focus group questions and prompts were created using the NUS (2015) as a basis. These were divided into four categories relating to the aims of this study. These categories were: (a) Frequency and Nature of Contact, (b) Academic Advice, (c) Support services, and (d) General questions. To complement the focus group, a simple 10 question survey was also administered to gain some general background to the frequency, nature and context of the support received (see **Appendix 1, 2** for Survey and Focus Group Questions). This brief questionnaire was a meaningful tool in allowing us to gain a basic understanding of each participant's experience with their academic advisor (Neuman, 2011). Furthermore, as this was completed privately by participants before the start of the focus group, it meant that students who may not have been as comfortable sharing their experiences in front of the group could still provide details of their experiences (Collis and Hussey, 2014) counterbalancing potential disadvantages of focus groups. The questionnaires were anonymized by asking students to provide their student ID as a means of identification during data analysis.

All research participants completed both the survey and focus group in a 2 h session held outside of course teaching. Seven students took part with a cross section of students from each of the four subject areas in the Service Sector Department (Food, Hospitality, Events, and Tourism). The session was held in a boardroom on the university campus to ensure privacy for the participants. To further encourage participants to openly discuss their experiences without the presence of an academic advisor from their department (who they may have had an academic advising relationship with), the session was run by a RA that had no affiliation with the department.

The facilitation of the group is critical to the success of focus groups, with the facilitator viewed more as a choreographer of the content (Matthews and Ross, 2010) encouraging the participants to "perform" by expressing their point of view to each other (Denscombe, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2014). During the focus group, the RA verbally posed each question and participants were invited to discuss their views. Clarification on points was sought where necessary, and simple reinforcement and encouragement provided throughout to ensure the discussions remained focused on the topics (Matthews and Ross, 2010). The RA also encouraged students to engage and share their views if they displayed any signs of disengagement at any point. Occasionally, in cases where it was deemed appropriate for the study, the RA asked specific follow up questions after students had contributed a point in order to gain deeper meaning of the students experience, probing further but not leading the conversation which can often be viewed as a limitation of focus groups and the role of facilitators (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2014).

Following the focus group, the data was independently transcribed and anonymized prior to the academics leading the project receiving it to further protect the privacy of the participants involved. What follows is an overview of the research findings and discussion in relation to the student perceptions of the role of academic advising.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study addressed the perceived relationship between academic advising and academic attainment in a group of third year students. In recent years there has been increased recognition of the importance of non-academic support provided by academic advisors to students, such as assistance with employability and the provision of social and emotional support (Small, 2013). The findings highlight the expectations students have of their advisors and the diversity in student academic advising experiences. Despite the model of advising followed in

Sheffield Business School in which the focus of academic advising is on supporting students with their academic studies three key strands were identified from the data in relation to student perceptions of what the advising role encompasses: academic support, pastoral support, and employability support. This is in line with previous research into academic advising (see Cuseo, n.d.; Drake, 2011; Small, 2013) but it is through these strands and the stories told that we are able to unpick whether there is a relationship between advising and attainment which to date has not been fully explored.

Academic Support and Attainment

As Habley (2004) stated, academic advising is one area in which the institution can enable quality exchanges between the students and the academic environment. Thomas and McFarlane (2018) go further to state that the true work of academic advisors is focused exclusively on student learning. With Sheffield Business School placing academic support at the heart of the academic advising role and professional services taking responsibility for pastoral and employability support; it is not surprising that academic support emerged as one of the main areas that students expected support. Participants defined such academic support as *"assistance with understanding course material; and support with staff/student relationships"* (All respondents). Within this, aspects of academic life discussed included course structure, predicted grades, performance on modules, academic goals for the semester, strengths and weaknesses, and aspirations for the future. In many ways this takes us back to NACADA's definition of Academic Advising being "a series of interactions" that cover all aspects of university life (Drake, 2011).

Some students felt that the support they received from their academic advisor was tailored to them and their aspirations; whilst others argued that they felt support was *"generic."* Students reporting the latter stated that their academic advisor met them in groups, rather than on a one to one basis. Although Battin (2014) indicated the potential for group advising seminars to be an effective and efficient method of advising the students who partook in this study appear to prefer the more traditional individual models of advising, particularly in the final year of study. Overall, there was an agreement amongst the participants that whether the support was tailored was based on the advisor's temperament and interpersonal skills. Haley (2016) supports this by stating that to be an effective academic advisor, individuals must care about their students and have the ability to interact with them yet the massification of HE has created a pressure to enhance the "university offer." For many HEI's, including Sheffield Hallam University, this has resulted in the formalization of the advising role which includes the introduction of group as well as individual meetings (McFarlane, 2016).

With regards to attainment some students felt their academic advisor was sufficiently informed of their academic attainment such as grades and that advisors asked questions during sessions which gave them further insight into students' achievements. However, some felt that there was a lack of consistency in support with a lack of follow up when attainment issues were raised in meetings. Collectively, based on their experience's students felt that their academic advisor was not always the best point of contact to discuss "academic issues" due to the fact that they often lack sufficient knowledge about modules led by other members of staff. Similarly, when asked whether they felt that their advisor was helping them to reach their full potential at university there was a general agreement that academic advisors were not perceived as supporting in *"uplifting grades, helping achievement in assessments, or supporting with course material."* The need for tangible rewards such as impact on grades needs to be understood in the context of a society of "want it and want it now" where instant gratification is preferred (Smith, 1987; Hall, 2011) and the increase in university fees has amplified student expectations (Budd, 2017).

Although McFarlane (2016) states that an essential part of advising is to keep the conversations going, the emphasis in this study appears to be on the academic advisor leading and initiating the conversations with students. Conversely, Young-Jones et al. (2013) place the responsibility on the students to keep the academic advising conversation going and those with stronger study skills and higher self-efficacy more likely to engage in, and see the tangible and intangible benefits of such activity. Indeed, several of the participants within this study did reflect beyond the tangible impacts of advising to acknowledge that the emotional guidance received from an academic advisor did support academic attainment and thus underpins the idea of seeing attainment from a more holistic perspective. Some students reported that their advisor played a key role in keeping them focused and helping them to remember their goal during periods of stress. By acting as a buffer against stress, some students reported coming away from meetings feeling *"refreshed, inspired and motivated."* This supports NACADA's definition of advising as "a decision-making process during which students themselves reach their own academic potential through a communication and information exchange with an academic advisor" (Drake, 2011, p5). Here, the student takes ownership of their own learning experience and the advisor facilitates "the students rational processes, environmental and interpersonal interactions, behavioral awareness and problem-solving" (Crookston, 1994, 2009).

Although the focus of the academic advisor role at Sheffield Hallam University is on supporting students with their academic studies, most students reported that they did not feel that their academic advisor was the best point of contact for "academic purposes" and that instead there was other greater value in the academic advising relationship. This supports Drake's (2011) discussions that although academic advising has long been seen as critical to student success, persistence and retention; it goes beyond supporting academic studies and is about "building relationships with our students, locating places where they get disconnected, and helping them get reconnected" (Drake, 2011, p8).

Pastoral Support

In addition to academic support, pastoral support is seen to be an integral part to the students experience in HE (Cahill et al., 2014). Although the Sheffield Business School policy states that academic advisors are there to support students on academic and professional matters and that Student Support Advisors and associated services provide support on pastoral matters, the importance of pastoral support from the academic advisor was evidenced in the data collected. Quantitative data from the questionnaire showed that all students, regardless of whether they had a positive or negative relationship with their advisor, felt that having an academic advisor at university was important. When asked to discuss this further during the focus group, the students expressed that this importance was largely for pastoral reasons with one student summing this up by stating: *"It might be worth changing the name from 'Academic Advisor' to 'Academic and Welfare Advisor'."*

This supports the predominant view shared by the participants that the academic advisors were often a first point of contact for any personal issues they were facing. With students facing increasing pressures of balancing living, studying and working, universities are becoming a "melting pot" of critical incidents that often culminate in personal issues. Academic challenges, increased responsibilities and living away from home added to the fact that 75% of mental health problems are established by the age of 24 (Mental Health Foundation, 2018), has led to 1 in 5 young adults suffering from a mental illness and 20% of students being treated for a mental illness (Skyland Trail, 2018).

The majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the relationship they had with their academic advisor and reported various examples of the pastoral support which they received including support with motivation during stressful periods, helping achieve a work life balance and discussing personal and health related issues. One student reported that *"I was in hospital and I had an exam, and my academic advisor was trying to get an extension for me."* whilst another reported further pastoral support *"I approached her by email, and we were talking for 2 hours, about personal stuff."*

Despite institutional protocol being to refer students on to appropriate support services, there is evidence that many students are turning, and returning to academic advisors over the course of time in part due to the relationships of trust that they have built (Hybels and Weaver, 2009; Sims, 2013; Heikkila and McGill, 2015) and also in part due to the time lag between referral and the receipt of further support from wellbeing services (Buchan, 2018). What is not being disputed in this research is the value of the professional service in supporting students but that the simplicity of the referral system does not reflect the complexity of many student issues. The outcome of this is that the academics continue to undertake the three aspects of advising outlined in the literature including pastoral care (see Drake, 2011 and Small, 2013).

However, others felt disconnected with their advisors stating that *"All he does is send me to other people!."* This raises a critical issue in the role of the advisor whereby there is a delicate balance between failing to build a relationship of trust which fosters the ongoing conversations that are so important (McFarlane, 2016) and stepping into a role in which advisors are not trained to do. Despite evidence of academics "bridging the gap" between support services, this is not a pre-requisite of the role and academic advisors need knowledge of centralized support services is key and to be sensitive when referring students on to other services so as not to be passing them on and remaining compassionate (Grant, 2006).

A further aspect relates to the way student feel acknowledged and integrated within university, especially in providing a smooth transition from pre-university life. This aligns with Straythorn's (2015) concept of cultural navigators in which academic advisors play a key role in socializing students into the HE environment and creating a sense of belonging. This integrative approach should not be underestimated in terms of academic advising as students can often be ill-equipped to deal with the HE environment and the multiple demands of living away from home, managing workload and working. As such academic advising needs to reflect these individual needs (Thomas and Hixenbaugh, 2006). Not uncommon is the support that students require not only to operate in the university environment but also the professional environment whether that be undertaking work experience or attending an industry event. One student reflected upon the support given to them during their work placement:

> *"During my placement year, I was feeling quite homesick, and I mentioned this in a Skype group session with my academic advisor. And she asked me to move the laptop somewhere more private so she could talk to me about how I was feeling.- She helped me keep my goal in sight."*

The provision of such a responsive and supportive advising environment can do much to enhance the student experience. Through identifying and overcoming problems, advisors are able to help improve retention, progression and completion and in turn increase attainment.

Employability Support

In line with the literature, the data supports the role that academic advisors play in supporting student employability skills and guiding career decisions (see Cuseo, n.d.; Gordon et al., 2008 and Drake, 2011). The importance of this area of support is highlighted by Lynch and Lungrin (2018) who state that career opportunities after graduation remain one of the top concerns for students.

The participants of this study outlined employability support as encompassing guidance with writing job applications, succeeding in interviews and providing references. Students also felt that the academic advisor should be someone who can mentor them in professional skills through being an individual who has relevant industry work experience. Although mentoring has been proven to have a positive impact upon student success (see Foen Ng et al., 2012), just as with pastoral support, academic advisors are often not trained in this capacity and therefore such a student expectation is not always attainable. Academic advisors are, as we have seen, positioned as the face of the university and play a vital role in linking the student and the institution (Habley, 2004). However, they are not intended to be the end point of the support process and instead are the start in which they play a vital role in signposting students to other specialist services including employability support. Despite some students reporting expectations for employability support to be delivered by the academic advisor, many students reported great value in being directed to other support offers, as illustrated by this response:

> *My academic advisor referred me to the careers service which I knew about but I didn't know some of the services that they offered, we did psychometric testing and assessment day simulations, I thought they just give you blanket advice on what to do in those situations, not actually run through them. And my academic advisor highlighted that to me.*

Here, a knowledgeable academic advisor was able to effectively signpost a student to a further support service and generate a positive student experience which will hopefully lead to long term career success. Although retention and graduation rates are important, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007) suggested that the ultimate measure of success is the ability of students to thrive in professional environments, cementing the importance of employability support and signposting by the academic advisor.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

What is clear is that the students in this study strongly value the academic advisor support with one student stating:

> *"You've got an ally on the course, someone that you can always go to, who you see regularly as well, even passing in the corridor you see them, and they'll ask how you're doing."*

In this sense, the results indicate a positive impact on student experience but from a student perspective the primary focus of advising was not about academic attainment in the sense of educational attainment as discussed earlier but rather "holistic attainment." Within this study, rather than focusing narrowly on the relationship between attainment and advising (Movat, 2017), these findings move away from this concept and value the role academic advising offers in terms of support with a wider range of aspects related to university life and beyond, such as wellbeing, pastoral, and employability support.

The results of this case study are in line with Cahill et al. (2014) findings, that a wide range of support strategies, including pastoral, and employability, are valued by students. Positive experiences with such support are thought to encourage learning, decrease attrition rates and contribute to improved academic achievement (Ning and Downing, 2012) and in support of Bahr's (2008) study, academic advisors are highlighted here as being critical to providing these positive learning experiences and environments (Bahr, 2008). In particular, it is evident that students value the advising relationship and the support provided has assisted them to be better able to manage in the university environment which in turn impacts on their ability to achieve academically. So, whilst this study has not found a clear impact between academic advising and attainment, academic advising does provide an indirect positive impact on attainment, supporting a more "holistic" view of attainment.

The findings indicate that the pastoral support given to students over the course of their time at university provides the scaffolding upon which retention, progression, completion and ultimately attainment of a degree classification is achieved. On the other hand, the employability support serves as a way to widen the student perspective beyond that of academic achievements, heightening aspirations and providing a goal to work toward. Relating this to relevant literature, we know that the setting of goals acts as a motivator with Locke et al. (1981) stating that they direct attention, mobilize effort, encourage persistence and facilitate strategy development and as such the practice could in turn increase attainment.

These findings could be likened to the principles of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs in which individuals' require fulfillment of basic needs, in this case through pastoral support, in order to build a core foundation upon which higher order needs such as attainment and employment aspirations can be achieved. In this sense, the relationship between academic advising and attainment is both explicit and implicit with the latter being evidenced most by the students.

Central to successful advising is the quality of the relationship between students and advisors which is documented in the existing literature with Habley (1987) suggesting that quality academic advising is made up of three component parts: the informational, the conceptual and the relational with the latter said to make the difference between academic advising and quality academic advising:

> *"Communication skills and interpersonal approaches such as listening, interviewing, rapport-building, self-disclosure, and referral directly influence advisor-advisee interactions and are critical to establishing positive advising relationships"* (Haley, 2016).

Further to this, Gordon-Starks (2015, p1) defines academic advising as "relationship-building" in which the academic advisor acts as a mentor, guide, and positive influence to their students. What is clear is that if relationships are to be positive then institutions need to take a person centered approach with the development of an effective advising relationship as a gateway to developing a wider learning experience (Higgins, 2016). Numerous studies have supported the value of empathy in that when students feel advisors are empathetic to their needs then authentic and trusting relationships are built (Hybels and Weaver, 2009; Sims, 2013; Heikkila and McGill, 2015). It is from these relationships of trust that students feel able to disclose their thoughts, feelings and any issues that they may be going through as shown in this research. Relationships between academics and students and the trust this often breeds has been a central theme throughout the data collected and in line with Yale (2017), the relationship between the student and academic advisor often embodies the relationship that the student has with the university as a whole and can ultimately have an indirect impact on attainment.

A further contribution is that attainment should be viewed more in line with academic advising definitions that focus on the holistic development of individuals. Key components of the academic advising role in this sense include connecting students with the HE environment, creating high impact learning experiences, developing social communication skills, enhancing behavioral awareness problem solving skills, encouraging lifelong learning, and developing employability (Cuseo (n.d.); Gordon et al., 2008 and Drake, 2011). As such attainment needs to be viewed less about academic achievement and more in terms of holistic attainment whereby the person is developed as a whole to better equip them to deal with university life and beyond. This was evident within this small group study, so whilst this may not be fully generalizable to other research studies, it is certainly significant within this study. As the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007) suggests, graduate attainment is important, student success or in this case attainment, should be viewed by the student's ability to thrive in professional, personal, and societal arenas. Further research into the relationship between advising and holistic attainment at each stage of the university experience and post-graduation would be valuable to build a bigger picture of the impact.

Academic advising remains an essential part of the new HE environment and this research further expands upon what constitutes "good advising" and supports Light's (2001) view that it is "the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience." There needs to be greater recognition of the complexity of the role and impact that it can have on "holistic" attainment that goes beyond academic achievement (Bahr, 2008). In this context, academic advising requires continued institutional investment and should aim to develop student agency in order to allow them to reflect, review and manage their own learning experience and become autonomous learners and professionals.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Due to the nature of the data involving students and ethics procedures, data was destroyed following data analysis so is not available upon request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Sheffield Hallam University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CH and CW: literature review. CH and CW: discussion/findings/ conclusion. NH: methodology/findings. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Survey

Every student at SHU is assigned an Academic Advisor, this is the person who is there to help you navigate the course and get the most out of your studies. We would appreciate if you could complete this to provide some general background to the frequency, nature and the context of the support you receive.

Please circle the appropriate responses;

1. I am clear who my academic advisor is.

YES NO

•

2. I have had an academic advisor for the full length of my current course at University.

YES NO

•

3. I know how to best contact my academic advisor.

YES NO

•

4. I have met my academic advisor this year?

YES NO

•

5. I don't feel I need an academic advisor.

YES NO

•

6. My academic advisor is approachable and friendly?

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

•

7. I feel comfortable talking to my academic advisor.

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

•

8. I would be happy to ask my academic advisor for a reference when I complete my course.

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

•

9. My academic advisor contacts me if there's a problem with my attendance.

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

•

10. I haven't made much use of my academic advisor this year?

Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly

Appendix 2: Focus Group Questions

Frequency/Nature of Contact

How is your academic advice delivered?

Prompts – Group sessions, 1:1's, meeting each semester.

How appropriate is the current format for meeting with your academic advisor?

Do you feel the frequency of contact is appropriate?

What kind of support have you asked your academic advisor provided?

Prompts – Pastoral support, signposting to university services, academic advice, professional advice.

Has the support you have received been timely and appropriate?
Prompts – Have you been able to meet with your advisor when needed?
Based on the support you have received, which advice have you valued the most?

Academic Advice

How well informed is your academic advisor of your current academic performance?
How have the meetings and sessions with your advisor helped with your academic performance?
How has your academic advisor helped you make sense of your course?
To what extent has the support you have received helped you reach your full potential?

Support Services

Has the information you have received from your academic advisor about support services been accurate?
Prompt – has this helped you navigate SHU as a large organization?

General

What do you feel are the specific positives about the academic advisor role?
What should SHU's priorities be to improve the academic advisor role?

PERSPECTIVE
published: 20 November 2020
doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.528683

Academic Tutors/Advisors and Students Working in Partnership: Negotiating and Co-creating in "The Third Space"

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In this perspectives piece, we argue that technology can be used to create and facilitate "Third Space" advising, via a model of "flipped advising" which focuses on the development of quality staff–student partnerships. "Third Space" advising, using technology, encourages students and staff to work together to create and validate knowledge, connect experiences, and improve the learning culture of the organization. It also aligns with Hockings' (2010) definition of inclusive practice in learning and teaching. While so much focus has been on the development of the advisor, the concept of Students as Partners (SaP) and "The Third Space" offer important lenses within which to shift the focus of advising practice away from the development of advisors and toward the development of staff–student partnerships, with a view to improving the impact and outcomes on students themselves.

Keywords: personal tutoring, academic advising, third space, students as partners, co-creation

OPEN ACCESS

Edited by:
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Specialty section:
This article was submitted to Leadership in Education, a section of the journal Frontiers in Education

Received: *30 January 2020*
Accepted: *03 November 2020*
Published: *20 November 2020*

Citation:
McIntosh E, Steele G and Grey D (2020) Academic Tutors/Advisors and Students Working in Partnership: Negotiating and Co-creating in "The Third Space". Front. Educ. 5:528683. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.528683

ACADEMIC TUTORING AND ADVISING IN "THE THIRD SPACE"

We, the authors, share a mutual interest in personal tutoring (United Kingdom) and academic advising (United States) as a means of supporting students to achieve autonomy, independence, and to realize their potential. Advising and tutoring adds significant value to teaching and learning, particularly assisting students in transition to negotiate their liminality and adjust to a new and unfamiliar learning environment as well as subsequently transitioning out of higher education (HE) and continuing their lifelong learning journey. To that end, we have collaborated over the last 3 years to investigate the impact of technology to facilitate staff–student relationships, uncover the student voice, and to improve advising and tutoring practice. These collaborations have emerged through our work with NACADA (The Global Community for Academic Advising) and UKAT (UK Advising and Tutoring).

We recognize that while there has been a lot written in the United States on academic advising, the literature on personal tutoring in the United Kingdom is limited. Most scholarly articles, both in the United States and the United Kingdom, are written from the perspective of the academic advisor or personal tutor. As Felten (2016) pointed out when he examined the literature on threshold concepts, students are often investigated as the objects of study rather than as partners in enquiry.

Similarly, the student voice is largely absent from discussions about the impact of academic advising and tutoring on student success and this must now be uncovered, examined, and analyzed. The concept of "The Third Space" (Bhabba, 1994; Gutierrez, 2008) offers an exciting opportunity to connect the work we are doing with the Students as Partners (SaP) agenda and reflect on how we might start to reclaim the student voice in tutoring/advising. "The Third Space" is not just a physical space, rather a term used to define spaces where hybrid identifications are possible and where cultural transformations can happen. Third Spaces enable cultural hybridity, where culture, identities, practices, and differences can be explored without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. For Gutierrez, this allows us to explore Third Spaces as zones of proximal development, which encourages "attention to the learning and development that happen in the movement across various temporal, spatial, and historical dimensions of activity" (p. 153). In an advising/tutoring context, this can open up key avenues of dialog and enquiry to support true partnership working and facilitate learning. Importantly, Third Spaces can support and foster equality, diversity, and inclusion in the curriculum and, to this end, may allow for more improved student experiences by revealing possibilities for improving access and participation and redressing the marginalization of certain student groups and identities within institutions and disciplines. Such groups include Black, Asian, and Ethnic Minority students, as well as LGBTQ + students, disabled students, and those with mental ill health. The Third Space approach is therefore well aligned with Hockings (2010, p1) definition of inclusive practice in learning and teaching: "the ways in which pedagogy, curricula, and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others." Here, we argue that The Third Space can be used to support advisor/advisee interaction, as long as there exists an intentional focus on inclusion through enhanced advisor support and an emphasis on access and participation, with particular attention to students' socio-cultural context. This is particularly the case given the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on HE, which has exacerbated existing disparities.

In this article, we argue that the "Third Space" can help us understand how the student voice can be harnessed to conduct further enquiry and research in this area, as well as consider the transferability and implications for advising and tutoring practice. This can inform further research which will impact advising pedagogy and highlight the importance of dialog between tutors/advisors and students as equal partners in the tutoring process. The terminology used to describe tutoring and advising differs across international contexts. For the purposes of this article, we refer to (academic) advising throughout and do so in hope of capturing the breadth of personal tutoring and academic advising functions.

Here we apply the concept of "The Third Space" to advising by considering blended learning environments where technology enhances learning and advisor–student partnerships—known as the "flipped advising" approach (Steele, 2016a). We hope that by reflecting on the use of technology in advising we can apply its use to the co-creation, validation, and negotiation of knowledge and staff–student experiences. Advising can take places in many different spaces. Some of these spaces are intentional and formal such as advising sessions, courses, and workshops, as well as through use of technologies ranging from telephone calls to the use of social media. Other spaces are informal such as conversations that occur during chance encounters between advisors and advisees. Through these multiple opportunities to meet, the student voice is heard and conversations between advisors and advisees are conducted. The relationship between the intentional allocation of synchronous and asynchronous learning and teaching activities across institutions can influence the quality of engagement with the student voice. Difficulties arise when institutions determine the allotment of the space and advisor time to meet with students by using return on investment (ROI) management strategies. Often, institutions using these management strategies seek the highest advisor/advisee ratios in the pursuit of financial efficiencies (Steele and White, 2019). Gordon (1994) highlighted years ago the many reasons why it is so difficult to engage students in a developmental advising approach which encouraged learning and requires the voice of the student to be heard. Gordon offered 10 reasons. Three of her reasons offer critical insight to the impact of limited advisor and student interactions in the development of spaces to develop meaningful conversations:

- Advisors do not have the time to become involved in the type of advising that requires frequent contact with one student; advising loads are too high for personal contact.
- Students perceive that advising involves only scheduling and registration, equating advising with high school "guidance."
- Institutions do not require contacts with one advisor over a period of time, so advisors cannot force students to have advising sessions. (pp. 71–72)

Gordon's insights suggest a complex interaction of variables that can contribute to reducing the quantity and quality of the student voice that can be heard in the physical, on campus, advising space. These range from the constriction of intentional spaces designed to meet with students, to students not believing that their advisors are the institutional representatives with whom to engage in conversations regarding their academic and career goals, or to help them determine how they can become successful students.

From a North American perspective, Fosnacht et al.'s (2017) study offers great insight into this phenomenon. The authors examined over 200 diverse institutions and over 50,000 full-time first-year students and found that the typical first-year student met with an advisor one to three times during his or her first college year. They also reported that the number of meetings varied across student subpopulations and institutional types (p. 74). It is our contention that face-to-face meetings between advisors and advisees that occur only at the frequency of one to three times during the first-year questions the mechanisms used institutionally in the allocation of advising and tutoring meeting spaces and this impacts the quality of the student voice that advisors typically hear.

To improve the quantity and quality of the space that advisors and advisees have at their disposal, we need to move beyond the physical space allocated by the institution and embrace a blended environment and incorporate into advising practices virtual learning spaces facilitated by technologies such as learning management systems (LMSs) or virtual learning environments (VLEs) and e-Portfolios. As Steele (2016a; 2016b) stated, these technologies provide advisors with the opportunities to create an intentional learning environment organized by NACADA's Concept of Advising (defined below): an advising curriculum and focused on developing instructional activities, aligned with learning goals, to help students develop their academic and career goals. Not only do LMSs, VLEs, and e-Portfolios provide the opportunity to structure the student learning experience, they also provide the opportunity to increase contact with students through the communication tools offered by these systems, something which can lead to increased capacity for quality conversations and partnership between advisors and advisees. Through use of discussion boards, quizzes, reflective questions, and short and long written responses, the opportunity to engage students in reflection on their goals and plans is also significantly increased.

Kraft-Terry and Kau's recent study (2019) endorses the positive aspects of adopting this approach. The authors created an advising curriculum for vulnerable students through a method designed to ensure that learning objectives remain central to the learning process. Instructional activities aligned with the learning outcomes were placed in an LMS that served as the platform for delivery. Students in four categories of academic risk were targeted for supportive intervention. Through the evaluation of direct-learning evidence, gathered through assessment, an improvement in student learning occurred. This approach also assisted the advising unit to engage in improving their instruction by use of direct learning measures to evaluate instructional effectiveness. The critical point to note here is that, through the use of learning technologies, advisors and students can enter into a more interactive and frequent SaP constructive, dialogic relationship. The enhanced SaP relationship supports the creation of artifacts, by students themselves, of their goal setting and planning, guided by the advising curriculum and helping to curate the student learning experience. Student artifacts of goal setting and planning can be selected and reflected upon by the student in the context of other academic and non-academic work. In turn, these artifacts can become foundational elements included in an e-portfolio system and can assist students with self-paced, independent, and autonomous learning strategies. McIntyre (2011) describes an ePortfolio as "...simply a website that enables users to collate digital evidence of their learning. Each student can maintain and expand their own individual ePortfolio over the duration of a class, a degree, or career" (p. 1). With the use of an e-Portfolio, students can share evidence of their learning and experiences with those who support their learning, showcasing examples of learning, and helping advisors to understand better the student voice (Ambrose et al., 2014). Or, as Rowley and Munday (2014) state, "ePortfolio development encourages students' 'sense of self' through a process of skills-uptake such as organization; collecting and classifying of evidence; utilization of tools; and reflection on and in discipline-specific knowledge, learning, and tasks; and higher order thinking skills such as synthesis and evaluation of learning." (p. 78)

Here, we discuss what this can tell us about future enquiry into staff–student partnership and the student voice in advising as well as reflecting on the use of technology and blended environments to facilitate and develop advising pedagogy. We draw on our personal experiences of working with both staff and students in the professional spheres encompassing learning, teaching, and research. The interest in the student voice in advising has had had a mixed history. Some scholars focus on what the institution or the advisor does in the relationship. As Lowenstein (2009) emphasized in his important and widely-quoted works in North America, we must advocate an "advising as teaching approach." Other North American writers have emphasized the student voice as critical in the advising encounter (Auguste et al., 2018). Because much of what is discussed and reflected upon here is based on our own conversations, thoughts, reflections, and writings, we aim to provoke further discussion, to suggest ways forward and transferability of approaches, and uncover possibilities for improving the blended advising space, rather than to make claims about impact. We consider the conversations, relationships, and the shifting identities that take place in "Third Space" advising and consider the implications of this on staff–student partnership and the development of the student voice. We hope that our thoughts and experiences will encourage those working in an advising capacity to re-assess their practice and invest in new and exciting ways to co-create "The Third Space" in advising, in partnership with students, and using appropriate technologies.

ACADEMIC ADVISING/TUTORING AND STUDENT SUCCESS

We are living in a volatile political, socio-cultural, and economic policymaking landscape, both within and outside of the HE context. In recent years, the mission and values of HE, on a global scale, have changed significantly and universities are now positioned as not only a force for social change but a means by which to achieve ambitions of social mobility, social justice, equity, and inclusion. At present, the impact of the Covid19 pandemic has encouraged a wide-scale upheaval of all learning, teaching, and student experience infrastructure, and an emergency pivot to online provision. We are now working within a massified, diversified, and globalized HE system, at a time of great uncertainty, which places emphasis on the importance of designing blended pedagogies for equity and social justice as well as progression and student success. This context places a renewed focus and interest on the role of the academic advisor to realize this agenda and to make change evident on the ground. Indeed, it has long been acknowledged in the United States that academic advising is central to student persistence and success (Donaldson et al., 2016; Dumke et al., 2018). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) has placed a renewed focus on the personalization of learning and on advising as a means of improving student retention and progression. Indeed, advising is a critical means of engendering a sense of community, belonging, and connectedness among students and staff (Lochtie et al., 2018). Advisors are key players in fostering cohort as well as individual learner identities, particularly assisting students to navigate liminal spaces and embrace new learning opportunities.

We work in universities of varying sizes in both the United States and the United Kingdom. What connects our experience is that our institutions have a diverse student body and place a firm focus on academic advising for student success. The missing piece of this jigsaw, however, is the absence of the student voice in realizing this powerful agenda for change. Historically, advising in the United Kingdom has been under-resourced, under-researched, and removed from mainstream narratives of teaching and learning. It is passive and transactional, removed from student engagement processes, and focused on the development of the advisor (through training and support) rather than assessing the impact of positive dialog with students. The same may be said to be the case in the United States, as Fosnacht et al.'s (2017) study quoted previously suggests that students only see their advisor one to three times during their first year.

We, as a sector, understand the impact of advising from an institutional and advisor's perspective but we lack the insight that the SaP agenda can bring to our practice. We must understand the student context if we are to make real strides forward. The potential now exists to harness the power of staff-student partnerships, especially in a blended and predominantly online space, to further the advising agenda and to ensure that it has the maximum impact on student self-efficacy and independent learning, at a time of acute learner vulnerability. There are many opportunities to explore what it means to practice advising in "The Third Space," in partnership with students, to explore the impact that this has on student culture, practice, and identity. At the same time, we should also explore further the benefits of working with students to capture the collective voice and in co-creating the learning experience. In institutions, we talk about designing an advising system or an advising curriculum; rarely do we hear of involving students in this design, which goes against the partnership and co-created, indeed, co-curated approach—these concepts surely represent a new frontier in advising and must be at the heart of shifting the focus away from passive, transactional encounters and toward developing meaningful staff–student partnerships.

In a bid to connect the complementary agendas of academic advising and student success, several frameworks have emerged to improve the quality and consistency of advising to ensure that it becomes a key driver in social mobility and the realization of this student-centered pedagogy. The NACADA (2016) Concept of Academic Advising (CoA) is one such framework: it is student-focused and comprises three parts. It (1) acknowledges an advising curriculum that organizes content to support students to develop their academic and career plans; (2) highlights the pedagogical approaches of advising that advance critical thinking, and (3) explores student learning outcomes of academic advising. The framework incorporates the key principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which ensures that advising practice offers flexible learning environments that value individual learning differences and promote equity and inclusion. The focus is on championing an advising curriculum which guides learners to acknowledge that information and knowledge can be acquired in multiple ways and posits that there are a wide variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they have learned (and what they know) as well as explore their culture and identity. It suggests that there are multiple ways for advisors to engage with learners to focus on their interests, challenge them to succeed, and motivate them to learn (Hall et al., 2012). The CoA is compatible with introspective advising practice, which "requires critical reflection on the student's part in order to bring about meaningful conversations that help the student to understand their purpose in [college/university]. As such, [introspective advising] is question-based, concerned with developing a rapport that helps the student become self-reliant and confident in their decision-making" (Parker and Williams, 2017). In a blended environment, such opportunities cannot be ignored.

The concept of "The Third Space" can assist in placing staff–student partnership at the forefront of advising pedagogies. We advocate here that the NACADA CoA and the principles of UDL are critical to fostering introspection and thus to the realization of "Third Space" advising where students are partners in the process and can navigate effectively the blended online and on campus continuum. Furthermore, we argue that technology represents a key way in which to do this, by employing a pedagogy of "flipped advising," one that is more "curational, negotiated, reflexive, and inter-disciplinary," as noted by Potter and McDougall (2017). Here, we conceptualize "Third Space" advising as being a blended arrangement of space where technology is used to enhance and support face-to-face staff–student relationships and pedagogic dialog, leading to a greater understanding of culture and identity and helping to remove hierarchical structures which can often be barriers to learning. This offers an additional, virtual, space to support and advise students and to facilitate rapport beyond the physical spaces of the campus and classroom.

Examples of students and advisors working in a blended "Third Space" environment have emerged from the College of Engineering, at the University of Florida. The advising team used an LMS to ask students a series of questions related to their academic program as well as what they do when not focusing on their studies. The three questions were:

- What are you enjoying about your Major?
- How are you spending your time outside of studying and going to class?
- How does this outside activity relate to your professional and/or personal development?

Some examples of student responses are listed below:

- "I really like how it incorporates both chemistry and mathematics, and really forces to me to work hard to understand concepts. Being an engineering major keeps me busy, and the fast pace can make my life very difficult, but I prefer it over a slow-paced major. I also really like the collaborative aspect to it, especially in ENC3246, where I get to work with people who are interested in the things I am interested in"

- "I am spending my time outside of class exercising. I also volunteer in the radiology department of Shands Hospital. I am involved in many different organizations such as Freshmen Leadership program, Vietnamese Student Organization, American Institute of Chemical Engineers at UF, and in club beach and indoor volleyball."

By engaging students in these types of questions before the session, the advisor has a wealth of additional background information to help place the student's experience in context. The student's experience, culture, and identity are at the heart of the advising narrative and their progress is tracked over time. When presented with this approach at the recent NACADA Annual Conference in October 2018 faculty and professional advisors responded with these comments:

- "I see an opportunity in this becoming somewhat of a 'triage' to help make my office become more efficient. The LMS provides resources for students that normally wouldn't come up until an initial advising appointment. As a result, my advising can become more productive."
- "The opportunities are endless. It is a great way to empower students to take charge of their education while providing advisors the ability to involve them in valuable conversations. The biggest challenge is just the time it takes to develop a curriculum and initially set up the LMS."

Advisors are clearly able to see the value of working in partnership with students to co-create "Third Space" advising; students are able to articulate and locate their experiences within the context of advising and reflect on their learning journey and use blended learning environments in order to do so.

TECHNOLOGY AND ADVISING AND TUTORING—CREATING "THE THIRD SPACE"

Technology for advising can take on many forms and can also encourage staff and students to work together, outside of conventional on-campus spaces, to promote student success. The LMS or VLE are key technological interfaces for "flipped advising." Other technologies to support advising include ePortfolio systems, student dashboards, early alert systems, social media, and video-conferencing systems. Here we focus specifically on the potential of the LMS to constitute "The Third Space" in advising and suggest ways of using this technology to facilitate better staff–student partnerships. However, there are many positive examples of how e-Portfolios can be used for a Flipped Advising approach. A robust example is provided by the State of Minnesota with its efforts in creating a space to help it citizens and students develop artifacts that address academic, career, financial, leadership, and personal plans and be uploaded into an e-Portfolio (GPS Life Plan, 2019).

'First, an LMS can be used as a "Third Space" mechanism through which to co-create an advising curriculum in a way that cannot be achieved by other means (Steele, 2015, 2016a,b). It can encourage staff–student partnership based on a typical understanding of the student lifecycle and help to capture data on learning analytics which can be used to drive the process. The curriculum can be constructed and created by staff and students together, based on mutual knowledge and understanding of key points in the student year, such as welcome, orientation, and induction, where advising can assist students to negotiate barriers and overcome challenges and help students to adjust to using different technologies in their learning. It can be used as a suggested program of topics for group advising sessions where groups can identify and discuss key topics and themes (Calcagno et al., 2017). This can be used to ask questions about the students' hopes, fears, motivations, and aspirations. It can normalize the anxieties that all students face, such as finding their way around campus, using technologies, getting to grips with assignments and assessments, and interacting with their advisors and peers. Typical advising curricula include expectations, missions, values, career goals, and planning, critical thinking, decision-making as well as policies and procedures, transferable skills, and knowledge. In a flipped approach, this can be set up practically in the LMS in several ways including via embedded resources, discussion for a, and student questionnaires. The opportunity to complete these activities in a blended "Third Space" environment has the potential to reduce anxiety about encountering new experiences by giving tasks for students to reflect upon and work through before the formal discussion takes place, for example, arrival at university, completing the first assignment, finding a graduate job. Advisors and students can work together, in partnership, to unpack these perspectives, to challenge one another, and to reach mutual decisions about support and to agree ways forward.

Second, in flipped advising, students are encouraged to complete activities/modules in the LMS beforehand. These activities are based on structured reflection and encourage students to engage critically with concepts and topics before the face-to-face session and should form part of their scheduled learning activities. Students are invited to offer their perspective and perceptions which can include learning strategies, assessment and feedback, peer learning, and professional development. Face-to-face sessions are therefore focused less on passively imparting information from the advisor to the student and more on developing a co-created dialog with students about their personal reflections and perspectives, using the work they have completed beforehand (Steele, 2015, 2016a,b). In the background, the LMS provides a form of "institutional memory" for advising where interactions can be recorded and facilitate deeper and richer conversations. This approach has the potential to encourage focused face-to-face conversations, where advisors can use open and structured questions to understand the student(s) context, engage with them to create meaning from their knowledge and experiences, and discuss collaborative goal setting as a form of co-creation. It is intended that students are empowered by this model and feel trusted to offer their experiences and perspectives, which encourages them to see themselves as equal in the advising process. Indeed, the work of Calcagno et al. (2017) suggests that student input into this process, and the co-design of activities to facilitate tutorial discussion, was particularly impactful. In the context of Covid19, these techniques can be especially critical as predominantly online learning spaces present additional challenges for belonging and connectedness, especially achieving a blend between synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, and to strike a balance between those which are tutor-facilitated and student-led.

Finally, "The Third Space" advising approach, negotiated through flipped and blended advising pedagogy, removes many of the barriers to learning that are typically encountered within the classroom, particularly in one-to-one advising conversations. Indeed, in the run-up to arrival, students report that their key concern is meeting people and making friends. Students also report that they place considerable importance on the quality of the relationship that they have with their advisor and that it is important to them that they feel supported (Braine and Parnell, 2011; Small, 2013). Students report that they also want specific types of structured support, particularly around professional development planning (PDP) (Braine and Parnell, 2011). That said, students report being more comfortable discussing academic concerns with advisors but are reluctant to discuss personal or pastoral issues (Hixenbaugh et al., 2006). Students report that they find interactions with their advisor far more meaningful when this is facilitated through technology and then applied in a group tutorial or advising context (Calcagno et al., 2017). In addition to this, students feel that the facilitation of group dialog, rapport, and discussion helps them to see their advisor as being more approachable. Finally, students also report advising as being pivotal in helping them to get to know one another and to foster a cohort identity and, as mentioned above, through the use of dialog and discussion (Calcagno et al., 2017). Again, in the context of Covid19, a flipped advising approach can help to harness the student voice, peer engagement, and co-curation.

A "Third Space" advising approach using the LMS to support flipped advising can help to address the concerns and opportunities outlined above, utilizing a dialogic approach and using the advantages of online learning spaces to break down barriers to participation and engagement. First, the completion of activities and the curation of learning resources in advance of the session can encourage students to engage fully with the process. By doing so, more time is spent in the core advising process (i.e., building rapport, discussing perspectives) and on having a meaningful discussion in synchronous sessions, rather than on peripheral issues which are often encountered when a student and advisor are approaching a face-to-face meeting "cold," with no prior knowledge or experience, nor of one-another. This self-paced, asynchronous activity helps to provide higher-quality advisor–student time which is something that students crave (Kraft-Terry and Kau, 2019). Second, the discussion of topics associated with academic development can help to build trust and rapport. When done collectively, with tutor-facilitated peer group activity (using the LMS or other learning technologies) students do not feel singled out for requiring structured support, rather they can see that their anxieties are shared and can engage in a form of self-help. Moreover, the advisor can use this information to work in partnership with students to reduce these anxieties and to encourage them to think deeply and critically about their needs, future goals, and plans.

The higher-quality partnerships built via this process can arguably encourage students to raise thorny and delicate personal/pastoral issues with their tutor. We argue that an advisor–student partnership based on mutual discussion, trust, and respect can help students to share information that will help the advisor support them to overcome difficult challenges and situations. Finally, the LMS can be used to raise specific topics for discussion and as a way to connect students with one another, encouraging student–student partnerships. This has a direct impact on helping students explore their own identities. There are ways advisors can encourage students to work in groups, via the LMS, to tackle questions about the process of learning, to offer shared insights, and to use the online "Third Space" to acknowledge and validate their individual and collective knowledge, perspectives, and experiences.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE ENQUIRY

In this article, we argue that technology can be used to create and facilitate "Third Space" advising, via a model of "flipped advising" which focuses on the development of quality staff–student partnerships. "Third Space" advising, using technology, encourages students and staff to work together to create and validate knowledge, connect experiences, and improve the learning culture of the organization. While so much focus has been on the development of the advisor, the concept of SaP and "The Third Space" offer important lenses within which to shift the focus of advising practice away from the development of advisors and toward the development of staff–student partnerships, with a view to improving the impact and outcomes on students themselves.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

EM wrote and amended the article, with contributions of content and revisions by GS and DG. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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