From transition points to transition process – developing our conceptual understanding of ‘transition’

**TRANSITIONS** - the experience of navigating change.

- Transitions are ‘fundamental features of everyday life’ (Field 2009) that are experienced personally and collectively.
- Students experience multiple and concurrent transitions during their studies: transitions in learning and transitions in their personal and working lives.

**Diversity of student experience**

**Transitions as anticipated events, unplanned or non-events**

**Dynamics - time and direction of change**

**Scale and frequency of transitions**

**Consequential for learning and knowledge transfer**

**Diversity of student experience**

**Career and organisational transitions**

- Non-events - expected life course transitions that do not occur. (Schlossberg, 1981)
- Inhibit learning as time, energy and imagination are directed to other tasks.
- Vertical and horizontal transitions - vertical – from college to university, horizontal – between modules
- Vertical and horizontal transitions – vertical, horizontal, within and between roles and organisations. (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011; Chudzikowski, 2012)
- Career horizons and the possibilities for an imagined future. (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Hodkinson, 2008)
- Organisational transitions – vertical, horizontal, within and between roles and organisations. (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011; Chudzikowski, 2012)

**Support for students:**
- preparation
- information
- mentoring
- careers
- flexible study
- curriculum change
- learner support.

**Institutional support for transitions**

**Major personal transitions in relationships, work, locations. (Fisher, 2012)**

**Micro and daily transitions – between roles, home, work and other social spaces. (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000)**

**Caution**
- Transitions are experienced in multiple and different ways.
- Transitions as a process for identity, role change and becoming can stereotypically label students and behaviour.
- Journeys and pathways can downplay issue of social equity, power, gender, ethnicity and disability that lead to differential experiences.

**Time to complete study varies to adjust to personal transitions in the life course.**

**Support for students:**

**Transitions are consequential sites for the transfer of learning:**
- collateral, two way, between learning and work (part time learning)
- lateral from study, one way, to work or college to university
- mediating (internships, work experience)
- encompassing (applying new practices to work/life).

(Beach, 2003)

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Developing this conceptual framework provides a starting point for exploring the key issues for Open University students and informs further work in this area.

Researching how we can support the different experiences of transition helps us to generate a new focus for the development of dialogue with all students in order that they can achieve their full potential.

References:


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