TITLE OF PAPER:

Online Induction Programmes: Developing and evaluating transitional online support

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INSTITUTION:         Sheffield Hallam University

SESSION TYPE:        Workshop

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:    3 internet PCs or 3 internet connections

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NUMBER OF WORDS:     423

FIVE KEY WORDS:      Induction, retention, peer-support, feedback, learning skills

PROPOSAL:

This workshop will explore online student induction.  We will evaluate a number of examples of online induction and transition programmes designed for students joining higher education.  The workshop will include hands-on evaluation of a number of examples of online induction programmes.  One of these will be a recently developed induction programme for postgraduate students in the School of Computing and Management Sciences at Sheffield Hallam University.

We will consider the relationship between academic level and the design of an online induction programme.  How should induction programmes vary for undergraduate and postgraduate students?

Feedback, and its role in the facilitation of student transition will be explored by workshop participants.  We will evaluate approaches to supporting, questioning, developing and challenging learners as they orientate to study at university.  In particular, we will evaluate the role of collaborative working.  We will explore the relevance and contribution of peer support to the successful induction of students into university life.

The importance of key skills and study skills in successful transition will be examined.  Approaches to the development and evaluation of lifelong learning skills will be evaluated and discussed.

The role of the tutor in online induction programmes will be explored.  Tutors may adopt a range of roles in relation to the programme, for example, the roles of leader,

instructor, coach, and mentor.  The role of students in the development and design of induction programmes, and in the support of students, will be considered too.

How long should induction last?  How long does transition take?  Is it appropriate for tutors or students to decide when transition is completed or when induction is over?

We will consider the relevance of context to the design of online induction programmes.  We will explore the context of the learner, the course, and the university, together with the nature of online induction programmes as supplementary, new or replacement activities.

The impact of online induction programmes on student learning, tutoring and the nature of the online university will be explored by participants.

The workshop will adopt a collaborative style that will draw on the expertise and experience of the participants.  We will work together to evaluate an approach to the development of online induction programmes and to develop some criteria of success for supported online transition for students.

At the end of the workshop, participants will have:
- evaluated different examples of online induction
- critiqued an approach to the design and development of online induction programmes
- identified a set of criteria that could be used to describe a successful online induction programme

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