

‘What really matters to Freshers?’

An evaluation of first year student experience of transition into University

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Abstract

Measuring student experience in terms of satisfaction is a national measure used by prospective students when considering their higher education choices. Increasingly league tables are used as a means to rank universities with a limited interrogation of the reality of students’ experiences. This study explored the question “What really matters to freshers?” during their transition into higher education through to completion. Students on an academic undergraduate Early Childhood Studies degree (n=530) over a five year period completed a Student Experience Evaluation in their first term and this data was correlated with the National Student Survey data collected about their cohorts in the final term of their degree. During the five year period, a number of interventions were undertaken by the academic staff to develop a learning community, based on the values linked to ‘being, belonging, and becoming.’ The results of this study suggest that three things matter to students about their experience, that is, the academic staff they work with, the nature of their academic study and feeling like they belong. A model is proposed which aims to demonstrate the impact of academic staff, studies and the learning community that develops through social and academic experiences at University.

Keywords: Student Experience; Student Satisfaction; Being, Belonging, Becoming

Introduction

The National Student Survey score for the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) programme in 2010/11 was 50%. This paper presents the interventions undertaken over five years to explore students’ perceptions about their university experience. The old adage, first impressions count, lead to the development and delivery of curriculum which supported the transition into Higher Education and sought to develop a community of learners. This paper will outline how an

external measure of satisfaction has improved by a dialogic process of change mediated through relationships, underpinning programme values whilst working alongside students to understand what really matters to them about their educational experience at university.

The First Year Experience is well documented in the literature as being critical for student retention, achievement and satisfaction. However, the transition into university and the students' experience of this transition has been largely ignored (Jackling and Clowes, 2003). This paper examines this transition and draws on two sets of data. Firstly, it reports on the results from the Student Experience Evaluation (SEE) instrument. This instrument was administered to Early Childhood Studies students in their first term at university between 2008/9 and 2012/13. Alongside this data, the Institutional based National Student Survey data for each cohort was examined.

This paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What matters to ECS students' about the academic staff?
- What matters to ECS students' about their academic work?
- What matters to ECS students' about their own education experiences and university life?

The findings and recommendations from this research demonstrate a fundamental shift in how the student –learner is viewed within a complex set of contexts which impact on their experience at university. It moves beyond the binary argument of student satisfaction- non-satisfaction. This research highlights how the 'paradigm shift' has evolved through the impact of technological changes which leading to social change and have supported the transition in and through the programme. By engaging in dialogue with students about what matters to them, about their experience, the academic staff have transformed along with the curriculum, how and when it is taught, resulting in a deep level change.

Context and background of the ECS degree

Early Childhood research and teaching programmes have a long and proud history at the University. The degree programme was first established by an eminent professor in the field in the 1990s. The discipline of Early Childhood Studies emerged internationally in the 1990s and

in 2016 is viewed as a multi-disciplinary field concerned with children from birth to 8 years, their families, communities, care, well-being and education. The degree programme started at A campus in 1996 as a combined honours subject, typically combining well with psychology, sociology, English, other modern languages, religious studies, and history. In 2004, a Single Honours in Early Childhood Studies was validated at B campus, followed by the C campus as the University pursued the widening participation agenda. The numbers were small to begin with. As the Labour government's Every Child Matters agenda (DSCF, 2006) was promoted the demand for an ECS degree increased. The degree moved from an education focus, to include modules from a wider range of professional and academic perspectives to include health, the law, and social care. A single honours was offered in A campus in 2012-13 due to demand for the subject. The subject continues to be the highest recruiting subject in the University's modular framework.

The recruitment of teaching staff from a range of professions and disciplines who work with children, has meant that as the degree continued to develop between 2007 to the present it can be claimed that the degree is multi-disciplinary. We now offer a range of academic, employment and online routes to study early childhood at undergraduate and postgraduate in taught and research, all suited to different students and a range of learning. Table 1 illustrates the student numbers over the five years of this study.

Insert table 1 here

The ethnicity of the students enrolled in ECS has changed markedly since the introduction of Widening Participation strategies at the University. For example, in 2011-12, the programme continued to predominantly attract white/white British students, however 21% of the cohort were identified as Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. This figure was previously 10% in 2010-11 and 6% in 2009-10. These students are enrolled in both Combined (Campus A only) and Single Honours students at the three campuses.

Literature review

The model presented later in the paper, assumes that like a plasma lamp, every touch or action has a reaction. The following review of the literature will explore the actions and reactions which are factors that impact on student satisfaction and their perception of satisfaction. It

identifies key elements of the student experience including arrival at University, learning communities, the notion of the student 'orb' and students' social interactions (being, belonging and becoming). At the heart of the curriculum and students' experience is a pedagogical and philosophical perspective which views the student at the centre. This is not just a tokenistic view of student-centred education, but student focus driven. This focus recognises their role and agency in their holistic student experience, both academic and social. This research seeks to understand students and their experiences to ensure that every 'touch' has an impact.

Arriving at University

Jackling and Clowes (2003) state that 'until recently the issues of transition to university have been largely ignored in educational research' (p. 1859). Merrill (2015) concurs with this proposing that there is a lack of in-depth research that focuses on working class students and that issues of retention and withdrawal are complex, interaction between student, the university experience and external factors. Therefore, this is an area of educational research that should be further researched to ensure that all students are engaged and happy as Tinto (2003) suggests that University can be an isolating place as it is geographically often disconnected from others. Howells (2015) proposes that developing communities of learning that are creative, supportive and sustaining similar to those of sporting communities (Sporting Communities CIC, 2013) can prevent such isolation that Tinto (2003) described. Xu (2011) suggests that many students arriving for the first time at University are not ready and that students find it difficult to transition and adjust to University life. It is possible that when students arrive, they may feel a little lost and do not feel like they belong as like schools, Universities are 'complex and chaotic' (Radford, 2006). Meehan (2015) proposes that belonging and identity is important within social contexts as they form part of how people view the world. Therefore, if students feel as if they belong, they will feel less isolated and lost.

Armstrong et al. (2009) reports that what students wanted from their tutors was for them to 'be more approachable and to provide more academic support' to enable students to be able to understand how they can be successful. They identified high levels of anxiety, uncertainty and disengagement than had been identified by national surveys. The significance of this research identified that tutors misunderstood the anxiety and resulting disengagement (Armstrong et al. 2009). This highlights the importance of researching what really matters to 'freshers' (first years) as they transition in and unpicking if and what the anxieties may be. One cause of these

anxieties could be as Brinkworth et al. (2009) suggests a greater need of “autonomy and individual responsibilities than students expect upon commencement” and arrival.

Learning Communities and the Student Orb

The notion of communities of learning or practice are not new concepts (e.g. Fearon et al., 2012; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Meiklejohn, 1932) but understanding the notion of the student learner as an orb is a new concept. Using the analogy of a plasma lamp, imagine that the student is the lamp/orb. (See Figure 1) Everything around the orb, or everything that touches the orb has an impact and it is this understanding of the impacts that is important.

Insert Figure 1 here

Sterling (2008) suggests a transformative educational shift in the development of new technologies and learning communities. These learning communities could include home, work based and University communities, which can be accessed physically and virtually. By recognising and adapting to the complexities of the student that makes them the whole learner is vital. Merrill (2015) reiterated the complex lives of students with multiple responsibilities especially when they come from non-traditional or diverse groups, such as the ECS students in this study. These complexities may limit how a student engages in physical learning communities, however, virtual and online communities provide a forum for positive participation and engagement.

NIACE (2011) highlights the importance of celebrating how home supporters aid learning, such as partners, parents, children, and friends. Christie, Munro and Wager (2005) suggest that for those students who choose to live at home whilst attending University, may be more than a financial choice. It may mean that family commitments and responsibilities, local community support structures, work commitments underpin their perceptions of their student experience and hence satisfaction. For students who move away from home to attend university they have a different orientation and expectations of the role of university tutors, families and others in their student experience.

The choice of support and number of supporters required by students varies according to the individual student as does the way in which they support, however each of these will have an impact on the ‘orb’. Tinto (2003) suggests that through the use of virtual learning environment,

social media and social networking community development and interpersonal connections can be realised. Time spent both physically and virtually can allow for tutors to become a familiar face from the point of open day, to the first day to continuing throughout the programme. This familiar face within the learning community (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) as Thomas et al. (2005) suggest that ‘rapport is everything’ (p.349) and time is needed to build this rapport and trust. A level of trust and sharing can help students to feel more connected which Greenhow and Burton (2011) suggest can help students to perform better. Vaughan (2010) reports that higher education students who use social networks are inspired by a sense of community they developed and he found that students achieved higher final grades than those who do not use social networking tools. Salmon et al. (2015) concurred and proposed that the use of social media within University setting has been found to enhance learning outcomes and academic achievements.

Social Interactions, - Being, Belonging and Becoming

Scoffham and Barnes (2011) proposed that happiness matters and identified the importance of emotions. On arriving at University the orb has a multitude of choices to make, all of which have outcomes that may have positive or negative emotions. These will ultimately impact on the orb’s satisfaction of University life and perception of their own experiences. It is important for the University teaching staff to construct situations and environments where positive experiences and opportunities to generate happiness to help support students (Scoffham and Barnes, 2011). Such experiences build on the child centred learning that is central to the philosophy of the Early Childhood Studies (ECS) programme. Meehan (2011) identified the importance of the “child having time and space to ‘be’ whilst at the same time learning and growing to ‘become’ and the right to ‘belong’ in their family, school, community and society (White, 2002).” These themes of being, becoming and belonging are embedded within the ECS programme. Belonging has been identified by DEEWR, (2010, p.7) as central to being, and becoming in that it shapes who the person becomes.

Methodology

In order to answer the research questions about what matters to ECS students, the research project utilised a positivistic approach. Greig et al. (2007, p.46) suggested that this approach was a “process by which the researcher seeks to establish the truth of a theoretical statement”.

Macdonald et al. (2009) proposed that positivism researchers traditionally work towards finding “a single, testable truth” (p.375). In terms of this research, the testable truth is investigating ‘what matters to ECS students’. The positivistic approach collected quantitative data through the development of a questionnaire, referred to as the Student Experience Evaluation (SEE) instrument, which was informed by the literature to measure students’ experience and satisfaction.

Furthermore, a second data set was analysed using the National Student Survey (NSS) results. The NSS is recognised within the UK, as a large scale survey which samples students in their final year about their satisfaction. The scores from the NSS are generally used by universities to examine the quality of the student experience. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in the NSS, and these will be considered in the results alongside the results from the SEE.

Data collection

The data was collected using a paper version of the SEE instrument questionnaire that included 40 questions. The data collected questioned a 5 areas of impact on student perceptions about their experiences in the first term of University. Factors included:

- 1) First impressions of staff
- 2) First impressions of study and workload
- 3) University life satisfaction
- 4) Student perceptions of own experience
- 5) Feedback from teaching staff

The questionnaire was completed within University session, all students were present and all students responded anonymously, all the students’ demographic details were coded to protect their confidentiality, a process suggested by Berg and Latin (2008) as good practice. Students were informed about confidentiality and the right to withdraw and informed consent was gained through the students opting in to completing the questionnaire.

The quantitative research design involved the use of five point Likert scales (Anderson, 2004) that measured students’ perceptions about the academic staff, nature of coursework and workload, social experience of university and attitudes about university within the data collection. Anderson (2004) suggested that “Likert scale is one of the most useful questions

forms” (p. 174). It is important to note that there were variations between campuses and the student experience in terms of the size and availability of facilities and the nature of the degree undertaken. Students were either enrolled in a Single Honours or a Combined Honours degree, with full-time undergraduate attendance.

Data was collected from all students, from five cohorts over a period of five academic years, n = 530. The cohorts were representative of the three campuses that the same academic programme is taught at within the wider University. Two of the three campuses were established to meet the Government targets for Widening Participation. As a consequence of this, the students undertaking ECS at all three campuses are showing more diverse entry qualifications and experience, come from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds and may be the first person in their family to go onto Higher Education.

Sample information

The students were classified and coded according to their age, campus attended, degree type, first person from family attending university, first choice of degree, cohort and relocation status. Tables i-v in the appendix illustrates the demographic data collected about the students. These data sets are indicative of the sample that was representative of the population of ECS students.

The age of the respondents ranged between <18 and 45-54 years. The 18-24 age- group had the largest number of respondents 80.2% with 45-54 being the smallest group .4%. The remaining respondents are made up from three groups <18 (7.4%), 25-34 (6.8%) and No age provided (2.5%) (See Appendix, Table i). The majority of the respondents attended the Canterbury campus (64.7%), in comparison with Medway (23.6%) and Broadstairs (11.7%) (See Appendix, Table ii).

Combined Honours respondents (54.5%) were the majority of the students responding to the SEE, when compared with Single Honours students (42.8%). (See Appendix, Table iii). Of the combined Honours students, Psychology (27.7%), Sociology and Applied Science (17.7%), Health Studies (17%), Education Studies (13.1%) and Sport Science (5.7%) were the top five subjects for the Combined Honours respondents).

The destination post-graduation traditionally for ECS graduates is postgraduate programmes in teaching and social work. Students were asked about whether or not an undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Studies was their first preference. Thirty-four percent (34%) of students indicated ECS was not their first choice. Of the 34%, 58.6% wanted to enrol in an undergraduate Primary Teaching programme, 13.8% wanted to do an undergraduate degree in Social Work and 6.9% wanted to study Midwifery. The remaining 20.6% indicated preference for an alternate Combined Honours pathway.

The SEE instrument was used over five academic years (n=530). The increase in respondents in 2011/12 and 2012/13 reflects the trend of increased numbers of students enrolling on the programme 2008-9 (71), 2009-10 (97), 2010-11 (83), 2011-12 (135) and 2012-13 (144).

Traditionally in the UK, students move away from home to attend university. CCCU is based in the County of Kent and attracts many local Kent students but also students from London and other southern counties. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents at Broadstairs and Medway campuses live within 10 miles of the campus whereas thirty percent (30%) of students in Canterbury live within 10 miles of the campus.

Analysis of Student Experience

In order to investigate the research question: What are the ECS students' perceptions about the academic staff, the education experience and university life and academic work in the first term at University? Four steps were undertaken to analyse the quantitative data. Firstly, Factor Analysis was used in order to reduce the number of variables. Forty two items were included in the data reduction process eliminating weak items. A scree plot confirmed five factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1. Secondly, the five scales were named and reliability was calculated for each scale. Cronbach Alphas were used to ascertain the internal reliability of each scale. Thirdly, the level of agreement between the scales was investigated by computing mean scores on each scale. Finally, step four included an analysis of demographic data using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to compare group means.

Insert table 2 here

This factor analysis forced five factors in the extraction of the analyses. These five SEE scales were named: First impressions of staff, first impressions of study and workload, university life satisfaction, students' perceptions of own experience and feedback from teaching staff.

In order to determine the level of agreement to the scales mean level of agreement for each scale were calculated. Each participant was allocated a score for level of agreement for each scale. This was calculated by adding up the level of agreement for each item in the scale and dividing it by the number of items for each scale. Table 3 shows the number of cases, the range of responses, minimums and maximums on the five-point Likert scale, the mean response for each scale together with its standard deviation.

Insert table 3 here

The table above indicates that what matters to ECS students is the first impressions of staff, closely followed by university life satisfaction, students' perception of their own experience and feedback from teaching staff. What matters less overall to students are their first impressions of study and workload.

These scales were explored further with MANOVA and this section reports on the effect of academic staff, academic work and perceptions of own experiences of university life on overall satisfaction and enjoyment levels. Data analysis procedures to compare means was multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The significance adopted was .05. If overall multivariate test was significant, univariate F tests were conducted for individual scales. This approach reduces the overall Type 1 error rate that would normally be associated with these tests. Effect size refers to the extent in which groups in population differ on dependent variable. Difference between groups mean as a fraction of the total sum of squares was used as an index. Cohen (1988) classified .01 as small effect, .06 as a medium effect and .14 as a large effect.”

Analysis of Academic staff

There is no significant difference in overall satisfaction with attendance at an open day prior to university commencement. This would indicate that first impressions of staff at open day or on first day do not impact on the student experience. The students who commuted to university found that the academic staff were less approachable when compared to students who relocated to attend university (.047).

Analysis of Academic work

There is no significant difference between student satisfaction between combined and single honours on the SEE indicating that students are happy on both pathways. It was identified that

the 18-24 year old group found the programme to be most stimulating when compared with the other age groups (.086). The 35-44 year old respondents enjoyed studying the most out of all the age groups (.09).

Interestingly, those students who had not relocated to start university had more difficulty adjusting to the teaching styles used by academic staff than those peers who had relocated. The students who had not relocated to start university also reported a less connected social experience (0.079). Anecdotally, this data is confirmed by reports from students that commuting to and from university, means that they do not participate in social activities and events such as clubs, societies and student union events.

Analysis of Student perceptions of university life

There is no significant difference between age groups and overall student satisfaction on the SEE suggesting that students irrespective of their age at entry are satisfied with their experience.

The students who were the first members of their family to go to university, were identified as having the most positive attitude to university life and they perceived themselves as most suited to university life (.065).

Students who moved away from home to start university reported that University life suited them (.075) when compared to those students who did not relocate. Also those students who relocated, identified that they enjoyed studying more than those who commuted (.004) The students who are commuting to university found the transition into university more challenging than those who relocated (.09).

Student Satisfaction analysis

Students from 2010/11 when compared with 2008/9 was found to have an increased level of social engagement which lead to higher levels of enjoyment and satisfaction with their student experience (.062). (See table 4 on NSS results) The table 4 highlights a 26% increase in overall student satisfaction for these two groups of students. The qualitative results indicated that the satisfaction was contributed too by the sense of belonging that was established within the online social media communities. For example students who connected online prior to starting University remained in close knit friendship groups right throughout their University experiences.

Insert table 4 here

Table 5 shows the interventions that occurred during this period, both in terms of the programme curriculum and extra-curricular activities designed to enhance the student experience and supported by technology. In particular, the introduction of a social media group may have contributed to enhanced student social engagement and feelings of belonging to a learning community. The SEE data for the 2011/12 cohort show a statistical significance for this group when compared with other groups. The data indicated that this group enjoyed study more than other group (.06). This may be due to the curriculum development and the roll out of a new validation and the introduction of the new programme values of “Being, Belonging and Becoming” that underpin the programme.

Insert table 5 here

Discussion

What matters to ECS students’ about the academic staff?

Creating a sense of belonging is critical to students’ perceptions about academic staff in the first part of a transition into University life. The interventions outlined in table 5 particularly, the development of online, virtual communities on Facebook has enhanced the students’ feelings of belonging, well before students have met the academic staff in person. Delaney (2008) concluded that staff-student interactions have a significant impact on student outcomes and experience in the first year. The trust and rapport that is developed from the outset is evident through the students’ engagement and concurs with both Greenhow and Burton’s (2011) and Vaughan’s (2010) conclusions about student satisfaction and achievement. Similarly, the findings of this study suggest that students who live in University accommodation may have a better educational experience due to the fact they are living close to the university and may have better access to academic staff who take on a personal and academic tutor/mentor role early in the students programme and this relationship develops over the three years of the degree. Christie, Munro and Wager (2005) reported that ‘day students’ from widening participation backgrounds experienced ‘exclusion’ in social aspects and their ability to form and sustain networks, due to their circumstances. Christie et al. (2005) supports the findings of this research which highlighted a difference between students who relocated to start university as opposed to those who lived at home. However, the innovation of the use of

Facebook with the last two cohorts may have supported the students overall satisfaction by the end of their programme and this support from this online community allowed for space to be created as an additional community. This links to the work of Furco and Moely (2012) who highlighted that learning communities created a space for students to develop competences and gain better understanding of their own needs as students transitioning into University.

What matters to ECS students' about their academic work?

Krause and Coates (2008) discuss the notion of the value of a learning community at university is a means to facilitate high-quality learning. Therefore, an appreciation of the students' sense of 'being', that is, their own constructions about learning, orientation to learning and their academic studies, impacts on their views about their experiences. The results suggest that younger students whilst they found the course stimulating did not seem to have the same level of engagement as students in 34-44 year old age group who enjoyed studying the most. This may be related to the different social and academic supports that typically are associated with people in these age groups. The 'older' students as described by Christie, Munro and Wager (2005) juggle multiple commitments, have a clear focus on their goals and purpose of their studies and sometimes have less time to dedicate to studies. The results indicated that the academic work can be both stimulating and enjoyable and it is critical for academic staff to recognise the differences between students' starting points and orientation to study (Christie et al., 2005). The value of learning communities is also supported by Fearon et al. (2011) who proposed that such communities of practice, (as learning communities) provided space for social learning, problem solving and development of skills and knowledge which is relevant to their studies. Social benefits of successful group work and negotiating with peers, developing social relationships, better group cohesion and in general "esprit de corp" (p.115). Therefore it is recommended that more group work both within University and within the online environment would benefit (as highlighted above) the year 1 students in their transition into University life.

What matters to ECS students' about their own education experiences and university life?

Since the new validation and the ideas of Being, Belonging and Becoming underpinning the formal and informal curriculum, the introduction of social media group before and during university life students have shown a dramatic increase in the overall satisfaction in the

National Student Survey results for this programme up to 91%. The increased sensitivity towards being, belonging and becoming part of a learning community by academic staff during this period, may also contribute to the positive impact. Belonging to social and academic learning communities in higher education is important to students and their educational experience as proposed by Greenhow and Burton (2011). Ballantyne (2012) uses the term 'ownership' to describe belonging as being significant in student satisfaction and university living up to their expectations. Also in the findings, perceptions of student university life was most positive for those student who were the first member of their family to attend university. Perhaps this is due to the sense of belonging and identity in the social contexts provided by this programme and the university life (Meehan, 2015).

Conclusion

Insert Figure 2 here

It has been identified in the results that here has been an impact of what matters to ECS freshers is academic staff, academic work and their education experiences and university life which link to learning community, home support and their well-being. The student experience is mediated through a series of 'touches' which shape the early impressions of students with regard to their perceptions about satisfaction. This is best illustrated through the analogy of the 'orb'. (Figure 2)

The data has indicated that what really matters to students is being, belonging, and becoming (DEEWR, 2010), those students who face difficulties are those students are commuting compared to those who have relocated, those who are not first generation university attenders and those who do not engage in social media. Our propositions therefore are, that the same academic staff who do open days also do inductions and work on first year modules to allow for the connection to be made so that first impressions are consistent with early experiences. This would then reduce the feeling of isolation and would support the establishment and maintenance of a learning community, initially staff led but moving towards student driven using both virtual and physical modes (Christie et al., 2005; Delaney, 2008; Tinto, 2003).

Finnegan and Merrill (2015) describe transitions for working class students to University as a risky transition. Merrill (2015) suggests that the understanding the stories of mature or older students, or students from working class backgrounds may illuminate the experiences of younger students from diverse backgrounds in this study, by genuinely appreciating the students perspective on difficulties faced transitioning into University and then supporting them in their transitions. Christie et al (2005) argues that students are increasingly pragmatic about their educational experiences and juggling their lives and multiple identities and roles with university, home and social life. In order to address the identified difference between those who commute and those who have relocated to start university tutors need to be aware of the two distinct groups, their varied needs and how this impacts on their learning experience. The results propose that a student who relocates to university away from family and immediate home support gains a network of like peers and forms a community which is both social and academic and for their time at university this becomes like a family. By contrast a commuting student, retains home and social networks and already established yet potential misses out on extra-curricular opportunities and social contexts. It will take them longer to feel like they belong and find their identity in higher education.

Tinto (2003) suggests that the virtual learning environment is the key that draws the learning community together through one forum, it is an equaliser. Therefore, in the ever increasing digital age, and the impact of this on social experience future research to further understand the student experience from a range of perspectives and at three campuses will illuminate the challenges faced by academic staff in delivering a multi-modal programme and help to support the learning experience. In conclusion, it is critical to ensure that there is not a mismatch of student expectations and experiences (Rowley, Hartley and Larkin, 2008) which may lead to dissatisfaction and non-engagement, it is conjectured that virtual learning through social media may lead to a more dialogic approach between staff and students and students with peers (Ballantyne, 2012).

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Appendix

Age range	Frequency	Percent
< 18	39	7.4
18-24	425	80.2
25-34	36	6.8
35-44	15	2.8
45-54	2	.4
No age provided	13	2.5
Total	530	100.0

Table i Frequency of respondents by age

Campus	Frequency	Percent
Campus A	343	64.7
Campus B	62	11.7
Campus C	125	23.6
Total	530	100.0

Table ii Breakdown of respondent by campus attended

Degree type	Frequency	Percent
Combined	289	54.5
Single	227	42.8
No course type provided	14	2.7
Total	530	100.0

Table iii Breakdown of degree type

First person at University	Frequency	Percent
Yes	275	51.9
No	241	45.5
No data provided	14	2.6
Total	530	100.0

Table iv Breakdown of first member of family to attend university

	Frequency	Percent
2008/9	71	13.4
2009/10	97	18.3
2010/11	83	15.7
2011/12	135	25.5
2012/13	144	27.2
Total	530	100.0

Table v Year of survey

Tables

Year	Campus A Single Honours Yr 1	Campus A Combined Honours Yr 1	Campus B Single Honours Yr 1	Campus C Single Honours Yr 1
2012-13	64	62	13	36
2011-12	-	109	38	41
2010-11	-	80	25	28
2009-10	-	85	21	22
2008-09	-	71	20	20

Table 1 ECS student year one numbers 2008/9 – 2012/13

	First impressions of staff	First impressions of study and workload	University life satisfaction	Student perceptions of own experience	Feedback from teaching staff
n	6	5	3	4	3
Cronbach Alpha	.81	.74	.68	.63	.67

Table 2 Results of the factor analysis varimax rotation for Student Experience items

	N	range	Min	max	Mean	Std deviation
First impressions of staff	530	.31	4.12	4.43	4.24	2.92
First impressions of study and workload	530	.56	2.63	3.19	2.93	3.78
University life satisfaction	530	.21	3.85	4.06	3.98	1.85
Student perceptions of own experience	530	.67	3.61	4.28	3.95	2.11
Feedback from teaching staff	530	.28	3.56	3.84	3.66	2.02

Table 3 Level of agreement in five scales (n=530)

First year	NSS year survey	Student Satisfaction score-lowest for programme
2008/9	2010/11	50%
2009/10	2011/12	76%
2010/11	2012/13	76%
2011/12	2013/14	79%
2012/13	2014/15	91%

Table 4 NSS results

Date of first year	Date of third year	Curriculum development	Curriculum delivery	Extra-curricular activities
2008/9	2010/11		6 modules each 20 credits taught simultaneously	
2009/10	2011/12		Major timetable change to reduce number of modules studied concurrently- two modules taught in 3x 8 week blocks across the year	Facebook group started for ECS students- all new students invited to join at induction
2010/11	2012/13		two modules taught in 3x 8 week blocks across the year Introduced formative tasks into modules Introduced LOBO as a teaching learning strategy	Facebook group grew for ECS students- all new students invited to join at induction
2011/12	2013/14	New validation for ECS Being, Belonging and Becoming underpinning values of the degree	3 modules per term	Facebook group for Freshers established and then invited into ECS group at induction
2012/13	2014/15		3 modules per term First Single Honours group in Canterbury	Facebook group for Freshers established and then invited into ECS group at induction

Table 5: Interventions- reflection of the student experience

Figures

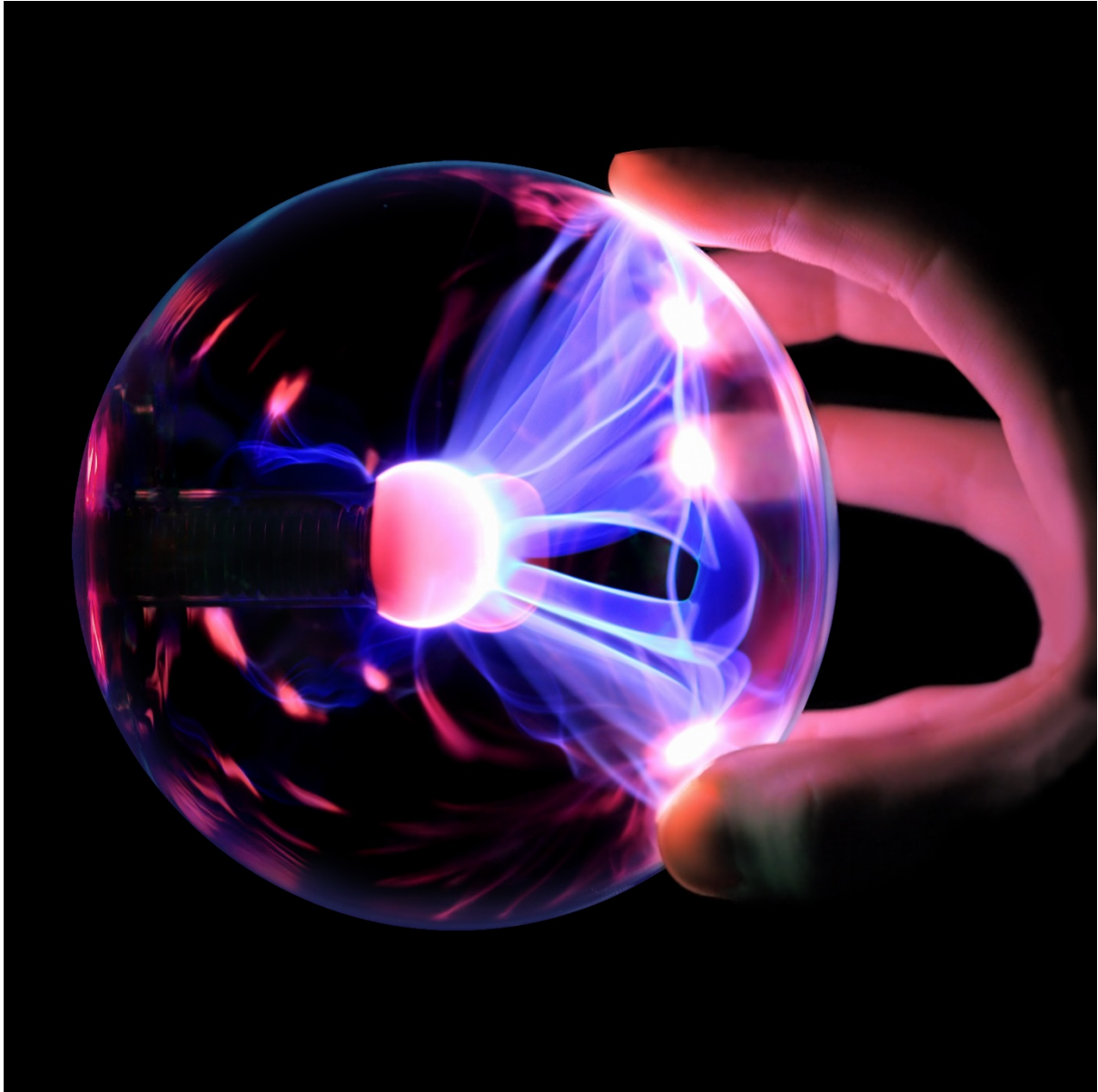


Figure 1: The student orb (plasma lamp)

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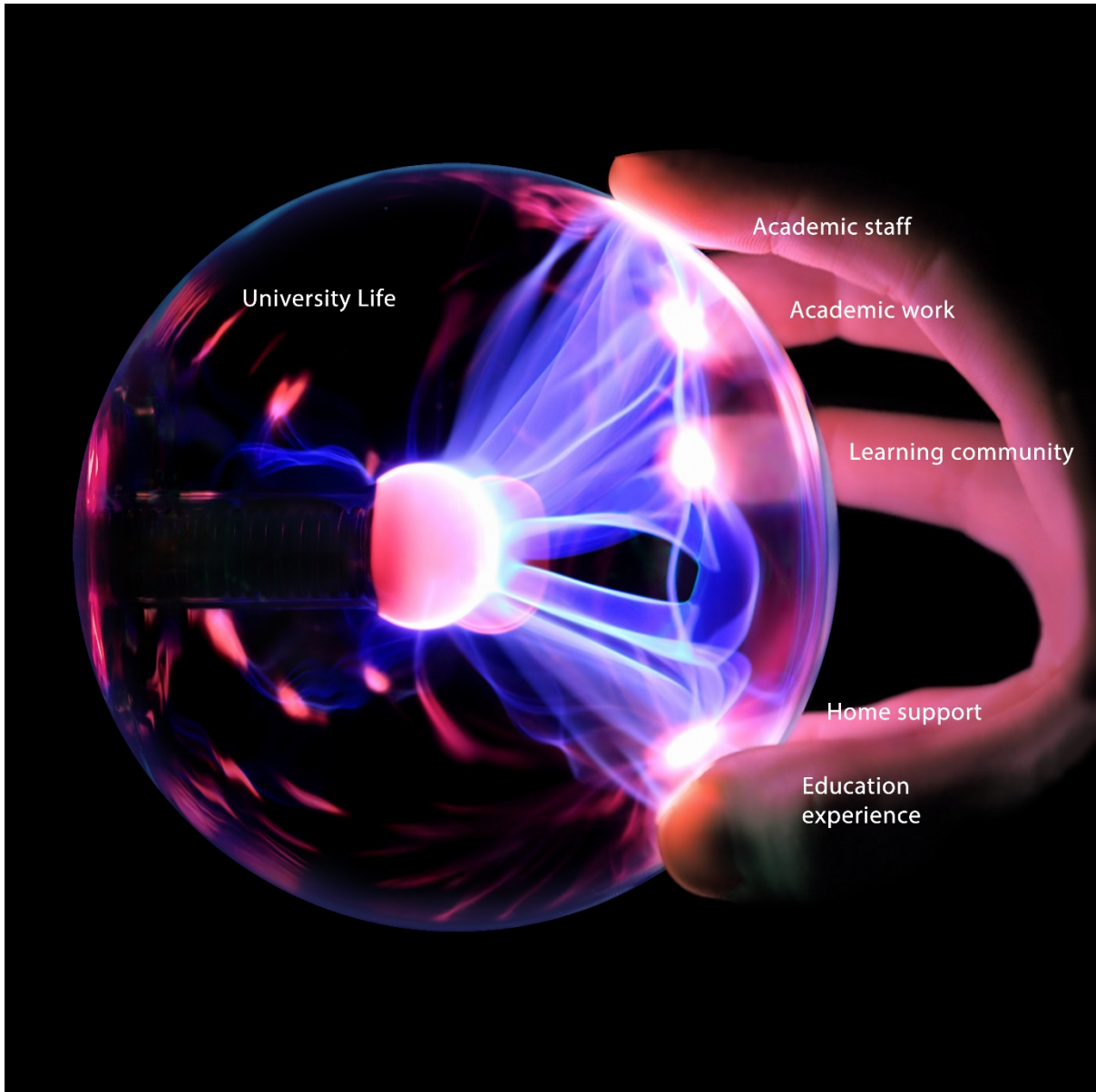


Figure 2: The Orb of student experience

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