

Exploring Generation Z's aspirations, indicators and definitions of "Student Success" in and following Higher Education.

Tom Lowe

SFHEA BA (Hons) MA Mres

Generation Z in Higher Ed

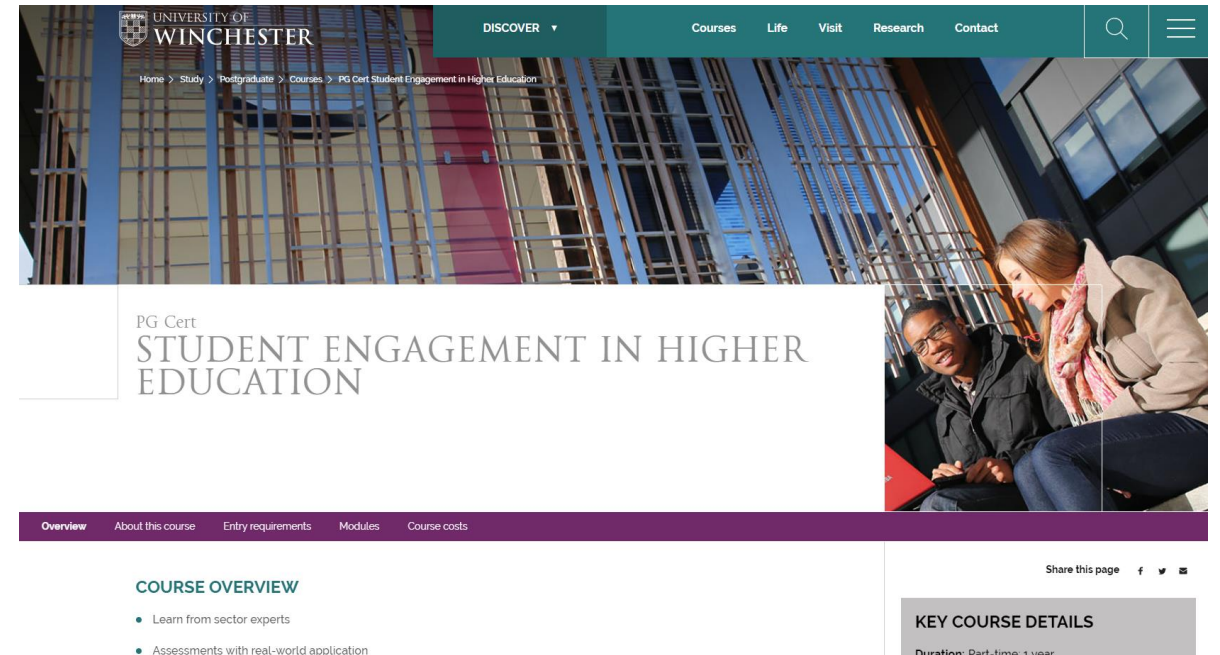
9th June 2021



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Introductions

- Head of Student Engagement & Employability at UoWinchester
- Programme Leader for PG Cert/MA Student Engagement in HE at UoWinchester
- Vice Chair of RAISE Network for Student Engagement



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Student Success in Higher Education

A challenge for all of us in higher education, then, is how we might develop additional opportunities for students and faculty to take shared responsibility for student success (Cook-Sather, 2018, 15)



Yet, 'success' is an amorphous term that means distinctive things to various stakeholders in any educational undertaking. (O'Shea and Delahunty, 2018, 1062)

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Introductions...

Who are you?
(Academic/Professional
Service/Manager/SU/Marketi
ng)

How do you define a
Successful Student?



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Student Success & Student Engagement

Push Factors

Office for Students 

OUTCOMES



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Pull Factors

Enhancement

Sense of Belonging

Learning

Transforming Lives

Accessibility

Student Success

Student Success in Higher Education

Office for Students: "all students, from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake HE and are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, Higher Education (Office for Students, 2018, 14)

In the Higher Education Act, success is defined simply as completing the degree programme (Higher Education Act, 2017)

No literature conclusion on Student Success with themes around high grades, outcomes and retention (Weatherton and Schussler, 2021)

Key stakeholders are 1) students, 2) institutions and 3) government (Yorke and Longden, 2004)



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Defining Student Success

Several definitions such as:

- Earning a degree
- Obtaining a graduate job
- Enjoyment
- Gaining a certification grade
- Satisfaction
- Personal Development of Skills
(writing; speaking etc)

(Kuh et al. 2011)



Student Success in Higher Education

Retention has historically featured as a major area of enhancement in USA HE– home of the phrase “College Drop Out” and a heavily marketized education system (Finn and Zimmer, 2012; Kuh, 2001; Astin, 1983).

Focus also on academic achievement, such as increasing grades in low performance areas (Pitts and Johnson, 2017; Evenback and Kahn, 2001).

“Many are managerially orientated ... [where] ... a managerial perspective trends to lose sight of the student perspective that can be seen in ‘persistence’, ‘completion’ and ‘success’ (Yorke and Longden, 2004, 1)

We can locate retention, completion and success in their political contexts (Yorke and Longden, 2004)

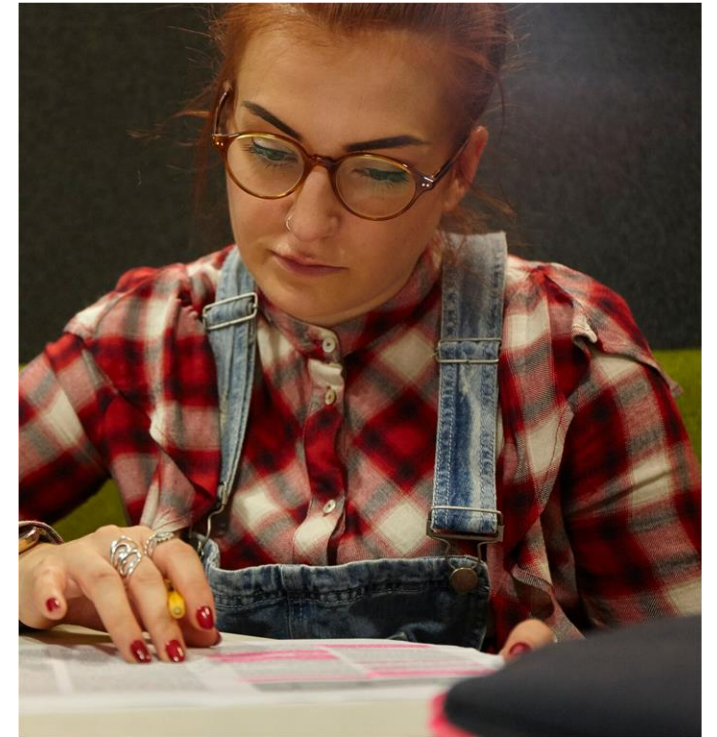
Student engagement is widely recognised as critical – simply put, students who are engaged with their studies are more likely to be successful (Kahu and Nelson, 2018, 2)



The success of an engaged student

SE is described to represent both the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to using effective educational practices (Kuh, 2001)

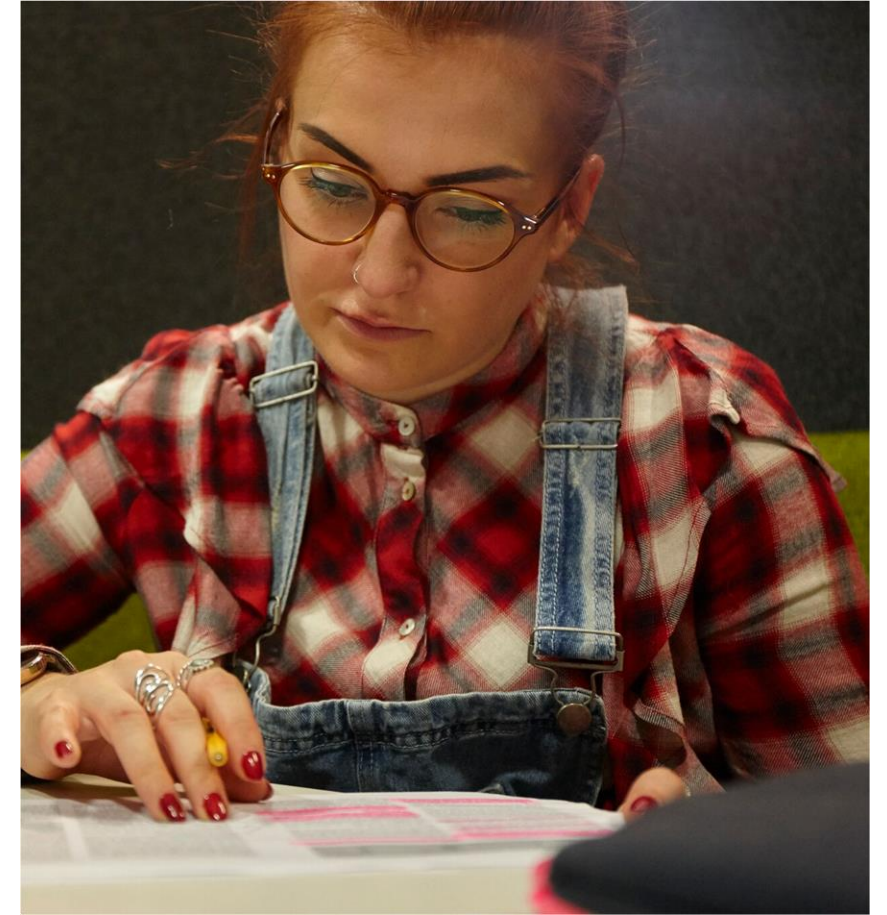
Students who are highly engaged in education-related activities are more likely to progress through and succeed in HE (Tschibozo, 2008; Tinto, 2006; Astin, 1984)



Generation Z students

Definitions differ but for simplicity – born in year 2000+

1. Digital Generation Z
2. Tuition Fee Generation Z
3. COVID-19 Generation Z
4. Activist Generation Z



Tuition Fee Generation Z

- 20 years of tuition fees
- 8 years of 9K fees
- 4 years of “value for money”

And they still come...and want:

- Excellent services; world leading teaching; welfare support; careers and opportunities; lifestyle; remote support; organised service; life experiences & freedom to explore!

Office for
Students



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Digital Generation Z

1) Google Generation:

- Instant answers
- Fast consumption of information

2) Netflix Generation:

- Vast sums of content from home
- Watch when suits you, not when the TV states

3) Technology experts

4) Experienced in distance learning

(Lowe, 2021)



COVID-19 Generation Z

- Possibly 18 months of social distancing
- Far less social further education experience
- Mental health and isolation
- Mixed home education setting
- Eager to return to normal *or* worried about the next steps



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Activist Generation Z



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Engagement leads to belonging

- At the heart of successful *retention* and *success* is a strong sense of belonging in HE for all students, which is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities that all students participate in (Thomas, 2012).
- **Factors that lead to a 'sense of belonging' at Winchester included:**
 - *Processes of becoming a student (enrolment, welcome, graduation)*
 - *Socialising opportunities in and outside the curriculum*
 - *Extra-curricular activities*
 - *Spaces, locations and housing*
 - *Course activities*
 - *Safety and community*
 - *Encouragement to succeed*

(Humphrey & Lowe, 2017)



Ask Students for their definitions of Student Success

Three key themes in responses: (163 responses)

- Success as a form of validation - achieving grades; “knowing what I am doing”
- Success as defying the odds - keeping going despite adversity; personal survival
- Embodied and emotional success - Terms like ‘happiness’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘being passionate’, ‘gaining respect’ and engendering ‘pride’
- What success is not

(O'Shea and Delahunty, 2018, 1062)



Ask Students for their definitions of Student Success

What do you consider to be “success” during University study?

- Achieving good grades (e.g. 2.1)
- Achieving goals
- Obtaining knowledge

What do you consider to be “success” following University study?

- Career goals or enhancement (majority)
- “I would consider anyone successful after university if they are happy in themselves, have expanded their world view and have contributed something positive to the world”

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What does Student Success mean to you?

...and what do you think it means to your Generation Z students?



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We are partners in our Students Success

Five Priorities for Student Success

Consideration 1: (Re)acclimatising to studying

Consideration 2: Imposter syndrome and sense of belonging

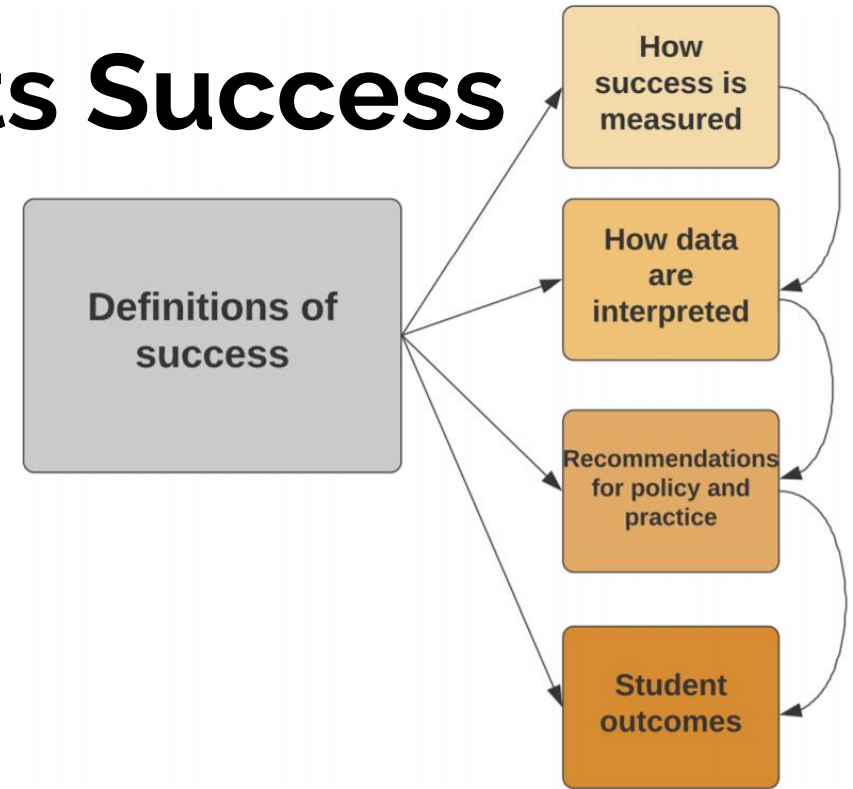
Consideration 3: Mental health consequences of COVID-19

Consideration 4: Increasingly unattainable hidden curriculum

Consideration 5: Accounting for (in)equality of experience

Student success for all students no matter their background?

- Technology poverty
- Space poverty
- Financial poverty



(Weatherton and Schussler, 2021)

(Pownall et al., 2021)

..and remember why we are here



- The University as a place of knowledge production
- Student learning and success
- Life experiences
- Unlocking potential
- Thriving against adversity

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Thank you for listening

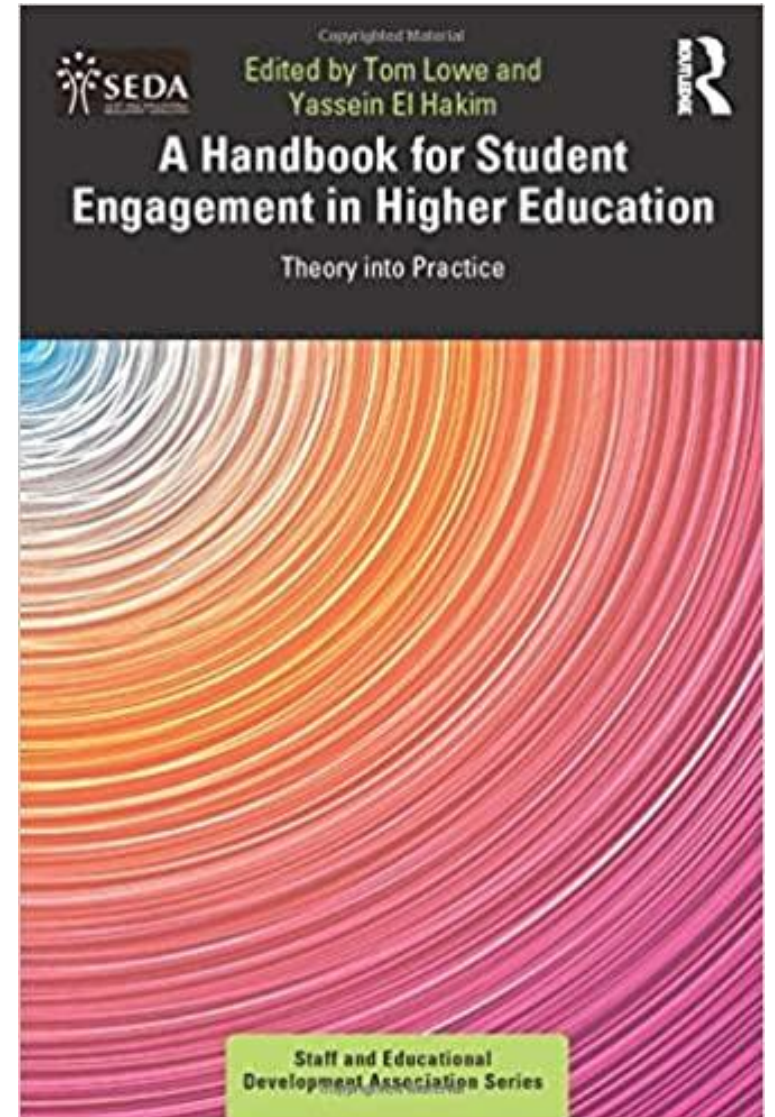
Email: Tom.Lowe@winchester.ac.uk

Twitter: @TomLowe_

MA/PG Cert Student Engagement in HE:

<https://www.winchester.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/courses/ma-student-engagement-in-higher-education/>

Any questions?



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