



# PrevDrop Module 1

## The Causes of Drop out and Strategies to Prevent Drop Out

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# Methodological Approaches to Researching Drop out

**Quantitative studies-** RAND study of statistical patterns across 4 countries (Von Stolk et al, 2007)

**Autobiographical methods-** life histories of non-traditional students, interviews with staff on what helps retention (RANLHE, 2011)

**Contextualised studies-** stakeholder perspectives via research jury days, interviews with 'drop outs' (Quinn et al, 2005)

**Case studies of good practice-**Paul Hamlyn Foundation, institutional research on student success (Thomas, 2012)

**Targeted studies-** studies focusing specifically on certain groups eg ethnic minorities (Crul and Woolf, 2002)

**Projecting studies-**Questionnaire based, anticipating trends (Heublein et al, 2014)

## 3 Approaches to Drop Out

There are **3** key approaches to retention and drop out

**Student Assimilation:** Where the student must change and learn to succeed and fit in to Higher Education

**HE Transformation:** Where HE policy and institutional practices must change to meet the needs of diverse students

**Socio-cultural change:** Where student, policy and institution are all shaped by the dominant values and practices of their society and **this** is what needs to change

**3<sup>rd</sup> is most important but most difficult**

## 6 Factors Leading to Drop out (Quinn, 2013)

**Socio-cultural factors:** community attitudes, self fulfilling prophecies, normalising of drop out for certain types of students and localities (Aina, 2012) (Rose Adams, 2012)

**Structural factors:** pressures caused by poverty, class, race, disability, gender (RANLHE, 2012)

**Policy factors:** strategic decisions that negatively impact on ability to complete (Callender, 2015)

**Institutional factors:** cultures and practices that do not support students to succeed (Cruel and Wolf, 2002)

**Personal factors:** illness, mental health issues, trauma (RCP, 2011)

**Learning factors:** poor approaches to learning, wrong subject choice

A combination of factors usually lead to drop out, No hierarchy and no agreement amongst researchers. Need to take a holistic approach

## Capitals, Habitus and Drop out

- Bourdieu's (1990) theories often used to explain drop out
- Each person has a store of **capitals** economic, cultural, social, symbolic
- These capitals are shaped by **habitus**: the way of being and belonging generated by
- Family, community, education etc
- Some people have access to multiple and large sources of capital with high exchange value: HE is comfortable
- Many have limited capitals: More likely to drop out
- But habitus is not fixed: it can change over time and universities can help students feel 'as a fish in water'

# Strategies to prevent Drop out

Quinn (2013) suggests institutions should embed 14 strategies

## **1 Preparing Students for HE**

Clear information and guidance about subjects and their requirements

## **2 Supporting students into HE**

'Long thin' induction programme integrated into mainstream provision

## **3 Tracking student engagement with HE**

Monitoring student attendance and surveying progress

# Typology of Pedagogical Strategies to Prevent Drop out

## **4 Creating a more relevant and supportive curriculum**

Reframing perspectives and content to build on prior experience/alternative knowledge

## **5 Creating more responsive pedagogies**

Prioritising a dialogic approach that respects student difference

## **6 Fostering positive approaches to learning**

Promoting co-operative, self-regulated learning

# Typology of Support Strategies

## **7 Offering financial support to students**

Institutional grants and bursaries for disadvantaged students

## **8 Offering personal support and counselling to students**

Psychological counselling and mental health networks

## **9 Fostering student personal networks**

Peer mentoring and peer learning activities to promote belonging



# Typology of Institutional Strategies to Prevent Drop Out

## 10 Improving formative assessment

Ensuring full and constructive feedback is given at the best time, especially at first assignment( *First Year project*, University of Padua)

## 11 Improving student study skills

Helping self assessment, note-taking, academic writing-integrating this into the curriculum ( *Think Sharp*, University of Ghent, Belgium)

# Typology of Pedagogical Initiatives

## **12 Targeting pedagogical support for specific disciplines**

Providing supplemental instruction in Maths, Technology, Science  
(BEST-MINT project, Germany)

## **13 Targeting pedagogical support at specific groups of students**

Low-income and first generation students, ethnic minorities and refugees, students with disabilities

(*Minorities in Focus*, University of Oslo, Norway)

## **14 Demonstrating the future usability of Higher Education**

Links with industry, employers, linking theory and practice  
(Arhus University, Denmark)

## References

- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (1990). *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2. Ed. [1970], London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage
- Quinn, J. (2013) *Drop out and Completion in Higher Education in Europe: among students from under-represented groups, EU: NESET*
- Quinn, J. and Blandon, C. (2015) *PrevDrop Transnational Report: Drop out from HE in Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and UK*

# Thank you for your attention!



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