

Topic stream: B. Good practice

Submission type: Presentation

Submission title:

Finding your way out of the Dissertation Maze – The PG version

Abstract:

Within Edinburgh Napier University's (ENU) 2020 strategy (ENU, 2015) there is the ambition to provide a 'distinctive and active approach' to learning. There is also an increasing focus on virtual learning environments (VLEs); these are now considered important in education (Park, 2011). It is therefore appropriate to present the Post Graduate Dissertation Maze, an online Moodle toolkit, designed to underpin ENU's strategic direction. The original Dissertation Maze is an e-toolkit conceived by Dr Kay Penny, Dr Jackie Brodie and Dr Brian Windram in the Business School. Written and developed by Dr Colin MacKenzie it seeks to support the transition of articulating home and international students arriving at Edinburgh Napier University for their final year of study. The development of the e-toolkit was in response to our research into the barriers and enablers of direct entry students embarking on the Undergraduate dissertation in the Business School. Direct entry students often find embarking on a dissertation a daunting prospect since they can lack the required knowledge and academic writing skills to formulate a viable dissertation proposal and have not given sufficient thought to deciding on a topic for their dissertation study. Initial research by Brodie et al (2015) identified that one way to support students' transition into Higher Education, and ease 'chronic uncertainty', was to provide opportunities for 'scaffolding'. The Dissertation Maze was produced in response to this, its post graduate version addresses many of the same issues and was funded by a QAA grant. Both versions have the aim of supporting students' preparation for undertaking their Dissertation in the Business School. This presentation will outline the Dissertation Maze and how it has metamorphosed into a version has been created for post-graduate students. It will outline the pedagogical approach, invite thinking and discussion on the content and discuss its target audience. This presentation's aim is to encourage a dialogue that will not only extend its promotion, uptake but also elicit contributions from conference attendees.