

Moving Beyond First Year: An Exploration of Staff and Student Experience

David Birbeck

University of South Australia, Australia

Lois McKellar

University of South Australia, Australia

Kat Kenyon

University of South Australia, Australia

Abstract

Transition pedagogy has had a major impact on the first year experience for higher education students in Australia. Similarly, there has been a significant focus on transitioning students from their final year of study to employment. Considerably fewer studies have sought to understand the “middle child”; the years in between the first and final year of study. Staff at a metropolitan Australian university noticed an increase in students struggling with university life after the first year of their program, with students purposefully withdrawing from courses or their program entirely. This article reports on focus groups held with staff and feedback via a student survey. Findings suggest the challenges faced by students in second year are multi-faceted, and curriculum and delivery should be intentionally designed to support students through a series of transitions throughout the university journey.

Keywords: Retention; transition; first year; second year; curriculum design.

Introduction

A positive first year experience is vital for students to engage in their studies and progress through their program. It is also a mandate for universities to ensure a duty of care and improve student retention. Transition pedagogy (Kift & Nelson, 2005) has reshaped the first year experience profoundly improving the success of students who have engaged with university from all walks of life. The purpose of this article is to report on a research project that sought to understand concerns raised by program directors at a large public Australian university. Program directors reported that students, whilst successful in first year, were not prepared for the second year of their program and beyond, leading to increased failure rates and a rise in attrition. The research project brought together data from both teaching staff and students with the purpose of describing staff perceptions of students' experiences/challenges and exploring students' experiences of higher education beyond the first year of study.

Background

Over the past 15 years, there has been a significant focus on understanding the challenges that students face during their first year at university. The work of Kift and colleagues (Kift & Nelson, 2005; Kift et al., 2010; Kift, 2015) on transition pedagogy has had a significant impact on the Australian higher education sector supporting retention and the goals of the Bradley Review of Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008). Transition pedagogy is a framework for the deliberate and scaffolded development of curriculum to support the success of first year university students from diverse backgrounds. Kift et al. (2013) later expanded



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transition pedagogy to the final year experience to prepare students to enter the professional world. The “forgotten” group of students are those in-between the first and final year of their program. Institutional student support services often decrease after the first year whilst academic and interpersonal challenges increase, resulting in students who are often dissatisfied with their institution or struggling with their study load and course content (Black, 2014). In the United States (U.S.) this phenomenon has been labelled “the sophomore slump” (Freedman, 1956).

Despite coining the sophomore slump phrase, Freedman (1956) noted that a comprehensive definition for what constitutes study beyond the first year is difficult. Gahagan and Hunter define sophomores or second year students as “first-time, full-time students who have progressed into their second year on campus” (2008 p. 45). In Australia, defining “second year” is challenging. Some programs have clearly defined year level courses. However, students may study part-time or move between full-time and part-time during their program. In some online programs, second year appears to be defined by how many units or courses of study have been completed. In addition, students who enter the university may do so with significant credit, which adds another layer of complexity to the student experience as they may bypass transition pedagogy activities (Brunken & Delly, 2010). This presents challenges when attempting to review standard collected data on attrition and retention, as well as the student experience.

Black (2014) likened second year to a mid-life crisis, noting that academic and interpersonal pressures increase as institutional support services simultaneously decrease. While it has been acknowledged that students experience specific challenges beyond the first year of study and that these challenges may impact on persistence in university study and completion rates, there has not been the same level of rigorous research as for the first year student experience.

The majority of research on the student experience beyond the first year has been undertaken in the U.S. and specifically focused on the sophomore year, concluding that it remained a risk for student dissatisfaction and attrition. There are a small number of UK studies and even fewer Australian studies that contribute to understanding the experiences of students beyond the first year of university (McBurnie et al., 2012). Gregory et al. (2013) suggest that there is some evidence to suggest that Australian university students experience similar issues to that experienced by students internationally but caution that there is a need to gather more evidence in relation to whether the sophomore slump is an issue in the Australian context. Willcoxson et al. (2011) in their exploration of attrition at six Australian universities note that approximately half of all attrition occurs in “later” year study. Presumably, later year study are those years beyond the first year of study. They go on to identify that students leave study at different times in their program for different reasons implying that retention initiatives need to consider the whole student journey (Willcoxson et al., 2011). It appears that further research exploring the experience of students beyond first year is warranted and may contribute to increased understanding and strategies to improve student retention.

Methods

This study drew on a sequential mixed methods approach which enabled the researchers to investigate the underlying phenomenon by collecting, analysing and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data (Leech & Onweugbuzie 2008). The aims of this project were to: (i) describe staff perceptions of students' experiences/challenges with study beyond the first year and (ii) explore students' experiences of higher education moving beyond the first year of study. The project was undertaken in two stages. Stage one included a review of literature pertaining to student experience and supportive strategies beyond the first year of study, as well as focus groups with academic staff. Stage two was a purpose designed electronic survey (e-survey) of students undertaking study beyond first year.

Stage 1: Program directors (PD) and Course coordinators (CC) employed within the Division of Health Sciences at the participating university were invited to participate in focus groups to explore and discuss the experiences and challenges for students beyond the first year of study. The Division of Health Sciences comprises three schools with 16 undergraduate programs across allied health, nursing, midwifery and pharmacy, the majority of which are clinical programs. Staff teaching in undergraduate programs were contacted via email through the established networks in the Division. The email included an information sheet and consent form. The inclusion criteria were staff currently teaching courses after first year within the Division. The focus groups were informed by semi-structured interview questions to explore teacher perceptions about student performance and experiences in the second and subsequent years of a program, whether students are prepared for post-first year study and what impact this has on student progression. Two separate focus groups were conducted, recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Stage 2: An anonymous purpose designed e-survey informed by the literature review was developed to explore students' experiences in the second and subsequent years of their program of study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. Students were asked to describe challenges in their current year of study that they believed their first year did not prepare them for, whether the courses they are currently studying are easier or harder compared to their first year courses, and what they believed would assist in supporting students to succeed beyond the first year of study.

Demographic data was collected relating to year of study, background and degree program. Students were invited to participate in the e-survey via the students' program page following permission from the PD. This invitation included the information sheet and a link to the anonymous survey. Completion was voluntary and students who responded were deemed to have provided informed consent. The e-survey specifically targeted the population of students enrolled in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of the programs within the Division. The inclusion criteria were students over 18 years of age; enrolled in the Division and who had completed one year of study. The online survey was estimated to take students between 15 and 30 minutes.

Ethics approval from the participating university Human Research Ethics Committee was obtained (Ethics no. 201755). In accordance with university policy, permission to interview staff was approved by the Pro Vice Chancellor Health Sciences. At all times the researchers complied with the ethics clearance and no modifications to ethics were sought.

Focus group data were analysed independently using thematic analysis by two researchers. The analysis followed the six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 90), namely, familiarity with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, and reviewing, defining and naming themes. Quantitative data from the survey was analysed using simple descriptive statistics and open-ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis as described above.

Findings

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with six participants in the first group and five participants in the second. The focus groups were 45 minutes in duration and represented staff from seven programs across three schools in the Division. Five themes were identified: students unprepared beyond first year, second year as transition, importance of the teacher, second year fatigue, program designs and approaches to teaching. Quotes from the focus groups are presented unattributed as the transcriber was unable to identify individual voices.

Students Unprepared for Study Beyond First Year

Participants spoke about their belief that students were unprepared and unwilling to take responsibility for their learning and they attributed this to the "hand holding" they believed occurred in the student's first year of study. One respondent expressed, "And when you transition from first semester to second semester as a second year, they just want to fight you because they still expect you to spoon feed the answers." Another commented:

I think, also, the [first year] lecturers probably drip feed a bit more, specifically the information out to the students and there's a lot more email reminders about what needs to be done and when it needs to be done.

Participants agreed students "should" be entering second and beyond year courses with "basic skills" and study habits in place with one participant commenting, "I still think the biggest problem is they haven't developed ... The most appropriate study habits." Another stated, "We found a few years ago that our second years were really struggling to write an essay assignment that we had put in, and we were expecting that they had these skills in referencing."

Second Year as Transition

This theme built on the belief that students were unprepared for second year but recognised that this unpreparedness may be due to curriculum transitions. The types of transitions discussed included a reduction in student support, an increased expectation for basic academic skills and independent learning, and an increased focus on specific disciplines and clinical application of knowledge. For example, many programs in first year shared generic courses, which were often perceived as

“memory” courses with students “given” answers. Whereas, second year courses moved to become program specific with applied learning:

But overall for second years, I think we have to be very transparent about the fact that there is, kind of, a transition of how, what we’re going to expect of them. And that we are going to expect more independence and more autonomy than we have in the previous year.

The introductory year, they probably seem quite well supported and there’s a lot of, I don’t know, people are aware that it’s their first year at uni, and then they get to second year and we’re really expecting them to be truly adult learners.

One participant likened second year to year nine at high school, stating “I have this thought in my head that I compare second year to like year nine at high school. Like, I hated year nine at high school.” Year nine of high school, in this context, is typically a student’s second year of high school and raises the possibility that the phenomena of a second year slump may not be unique to the university sector. Participants recognised that first year transition strategies may not have prepared students adequately for the ongoing transitions they are met with beyond the first year. It was also suggested that students need to be very clearly informed of ongoing expectations:

Well, we wrap them up on cotton wool so they don’t see the reality yet [in 1st year]. They’re still like, it’s like Year 12, there is no reality. ... and some wheels do fall off in first year but for the high achieving ones that have gotten through there’s no reality until second year and suddenly they have to mature a bit then and they’ve got to make these decisions.

So, sort of like a reorientation session where you bring them back in. you know, this is what’s expected of you in this year and, you know ... there’s not going to be as much hand holding and that sort of stuff.

Interestingly, some participants believed that transition from first to second year was a new point of risk for attrition, which previously may have been experienced in first year. One participant commented, “I find a lot of them drop out between first and second year.”

Second Year Fatigue

During the discussion participants identified that students experience increased workloads, greater academic demands and difficulty balancing life external to university, and that this seemed to contribute to student fatigue in second year. Where first year students had hope and excitement, in second year they were hit hard by the demands:

And I think it might come back to they get through first year because they don’t have to do a lot of work so they’re actually, they’re working a full-time job and doing their holidays and then they hit second year.

Additionally, in second year, with a greater focus on applied learning and developing specific professional skill, some students found the demands of placements stressful. Lecturers spoke of supporting students to navigate this complexity:

Because a lot of the students we see that are having difficulties, it often is around those social circumstances and suddenly they have to juggle placements and it’s usually a hospital placement which is more pressure.

... and then in second year, we’re asking them to apply it and not necessarily because you’re academically smart are you going to be good at applying it. And that’s quite a knock to their confidence.

Importance of the Teacher

Participants recognised their importance as teachers to the success of the students, “I explicitly say that to the students now, just so that they do get, you know, I’m here, use me, I’m here, you know, to teach you”, and spoke of trying to encourage students to be confident and not fearful, particularly in relation to assessment saying “One of the other things I think about too, about that whole environment of assessment, is that they feel very nervous and I think it’s part of our job to make them feel calmer.” Participants lamented the lack of personal contact with students as they move on from first year:

We, (as first year lecturers) you know we care, we love, we’re there, we answer the emails, ...and sometimes I find that as they go into second year there is far more of the removal of us as, us on the learning journey together to ‘I am the instructor and you are my students and you will sit there and you will learn.’ There is much more of that, that disconnect.

Program Designs and Approaches to Teaching

One participant noted “I’ve been lucky, I’ve taught right across the degree” and further claimed that their knowledge of the program allowed them to help set the expectation of students and to give the students informed advice about where they were in their learning journey. Their knowledge, however, was happenstance, not the result of deliberate mapping and communication. It is possible that teachers in the program had different expectations and perceptions of the student learning journey. One participant commented that “I was only teaching second and third year, I hadn’t thought about what they were coming from in first year.” Whereas another noted that it was helpful to teach in both first and second year; “So I sort of got to nurture them and head them in the right direction in first year and then get them again in second year, they really appreciated that.”

The idea that there was no agreed understanding of the program either in terms of program design or approach to teaching was recognised as something that needed to be addressed:

To actually go back and much more carefully map our articulation of between first and second year. So we’ve pulled stuff out of second year and put it right back very early in first year in practical skills to try and actually promote some more, ... But sometimes there’s an assumption by second year and higher-level coordinators what’s been taught before it and, you know, I think yeah that can be, that’s where that mapping process perhaps.

One participant acknowledged that their experience as a PD gave them a broader program perspective which they found helpful stating “Three years of program director experience, getting that sort of broader, before that it was mainly just the courses I taught whereas now I get a bit more of a helicopter view.”

Student E-Survey

Seventy-one students completed the e-survey over a period of six weeks. The majority of respondents were aged 18-35 and 78% of respondents were in their second or third year of their program with the remaining 22% being in 4th year or beyond. Overall, 13 programs were represented including Nutrition & Food Sciences, Clinical Exercise Physiology, Health Science, Medical Science, Medical Radiation Science, Midwifery, Nursing, Pharmaceutical Science/Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Exercise & Sport Science/Nutrition & Food Sciences, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Social Work. Entry pathways to university were also collected (see Table 1).

Table 1

Entry Pathway to University

Entry pathway	n	%
School leaver (e.g., completion of Year 12)	38	53.5%
Alternative entry pathway	4	5.6%
STAT test *	10	14.1%
International (international student)	5	7.0%
Other (GPA, prior degree, diploma)	14	19.7%
Total	71	100

*The Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) provides an equity pathway to university for Australian students and is designed to assess literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills.

Students were asked to rate how well supported they felt in the second year of their program, 52% (n=37) felt either well or very well supported, 33% (n=23) felt somewhat supported with 15% (n=11) claiming little support or no support at all. This finding was consistent across the variety of programs. The data was further explored based on their pathway to university (see Table 2). Notably, while 44.7% of school leavers felt well supported, 36.8% felt only somewhat supported and 16% felt little

to no support. Additionally, only 50% students entering through STAT or Foundation¹ indicated feeling well or very well supported.

Table 2

Question: In the second year of your program how well supported did you feel at university?

	Entry pathway									
	School leaver		Foundation pathway		STAT test		International		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very well supported	0	0	1	25.0	2	20.0	0	0	4	28.6
Well supported	17	44.7	1	25.0	3	30.0	4	80.0	5	35.7
Somewhat supported	14	36.8	2	50.0	2	20.0	1	20.0	4	28.6
Little support	6	15.8	0	0	3	30.0	0	0	1	7.1
No support at all	1	2.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort Total	38		4		10		5		14	

Students were also asked how well they felt first year had prepared them for the second year of their program. 49.3% (n=35) felt that it had prepared them well or very well, 46.5% (n=33) felt that it somewhat prepared them, with only 4.3% (n=3) stating it did not prepare them well. Students were also asked if they felt the workload was reasonable, with the majority (69%) of students indicating that it was appropriate.

Students were also questioned on whether they had been introduced to skills that would support their study (see Table 3).

Table 3

Question: Did any of the courses in your program introduce the following learning skills that you have been able to use to make your study more successful? (tick all that apply)

Learning Skills	n=71	%
Team/group work	41	57.8%
Critical analysis skills	41	57.8%
Academic integrity	39	54.9%
Exam preparation	37	52.1%
Library search strategies	36	50.7%
Writing skills	31	43.7%
Time management	26	36.6%
IT literacy	14	19.7%
Other (please specify)	3	4.2%

¹ Foundation pathways are alternate university entry pathways for people who do not have the required qualification for direct entry.

Students were asked if they believed that the university should give more attention to preparing students for study beyond the first year, the majority (70.4%) indicated yes.

Responses to open ended questions were analysed using thematic analysis. Three major themes emerged from the data: student journey as full of transitions; educator as a key to success; and peers and feeling connected. Notably, while themes raised by students were similar to those in the staff interviews, students discussed the themes in slightly different ways.

Student Journey as Full of Transitions

Students described their learning experience and challenges in terms of continuous transitions. Among these were: the transition into first year of university; transition from first year to second year; transition from learning theory to applied practice-based learning. Transition into first year was discussed in terms of access to support services either offered within the program or found through searching the university's website. Respondent 6 stated that "I searched the university website to find some preparatory courses to help with the transition to university study." Another respondent commented:

I attended the mature age students' orientation to university and my program orientation. Both helped immensely with the transition by promoting strategies I then used to successfully transition to tertiary study. (Respondent 21)

Respondents described university support services in two ways. Firstly, support services such as academic writing skills or time management skills delivered as part of the program they were studying. Secondly, as support offered separate to their program which required them to seek these services. Students valued the support services delivered as part of the program more highly than those they had to seek out. One respondent reported that information about support was hard to find and limited stating "The range of support services surrounding university study require more advertising and promotion within the class environments" (Respondent 62).

Transition beyond first year was discussed in various ways. First year was described predominantly as a generic year, shared with students from other programs, whilst second year demanded they see themselves in terms of their individual discipline-based courses. Some students thrived and liked the discipline-based work while others found the work significantly harder and the sudden shift from shared courses to discipline courses was a shock; one student described it in this way, "Perhaps ramping the workload up a little more gradually, the jump between first and second year was quite significant" (Respondent 13). These students perceived first year as separate from their actual program of study and that to some extent their real program was consequently jammed into the remaining years of the program:

The first year of ('x' Program) is building a foundation for knowledge, is all theoretical. This is needed, and must be done early in the degree, but in second year once we start clinical practice, it feels quite rushed, and feels like we are thrown into the deep end once we start treating patients... (Respondent 4)

Whilst the transition to more disciplined-based courses, with their increased study demands and pressure on work life balance, was difficult to navigate for some, others only realised at this stage that they had chosen the wrong degree. Respondent 36 suggested that staff needed to "Help the students gain an understanding of this degree and I didn't really have an idea until 3rd year, which is a little late." Respondent 30 shared this concern "Only halfway through 2nd year study do many students realise if [profession 'y'] is truly something they want to do..."

The final area where students discussed transition was when they were required to attend placement sites and their study moved from being predominantly theoretical to practical courses. Students who had trouble balancing their life before found these issues exacerbated when on placement. Respondent 29 described a major issue as the "Huge workload balancing uni, placement, COCE [continuity of care experience], job applications plus normal life." Respondent 26 agreed saying "Significant assignments due during placement blocks/COCE [continuity of care experience – clinical] and TPPP [graduate year] applications. I feel these expectations are unrealistic and don't reflect the work/life balances we will have as graduates. I feel burnt out already."

Importance of a Caring Educator for Student Success

Students spoke about having positive experiences with staff. While staff who answered emails quickly and gave accurate information were valued, it was those staff who cared that had the greatest impact. A supportive and empathetic PD was seen as critical:

My Program Director – ('Z') helped me many times and has supported and encourage me to be involved in not just Uni, but to broaden my involvement. She supported, and helped me to attend a Summer school. She was excellent and went out of her way to help me transition through the Second semester of year - 1. The whole (Program 'w') teaching team have welfare of Students ... firstly. We are treated like a big family. (Respondent 2)

Conversely, students who felt unsupported and uncared for talked of how this impacted their mental and emotional health and created a sense of feeling anonymous. Respondent 47 spoke in terms of feeling judged, saying “Teachers need to be less judgmental and less condescending towards students who are disadvantaged.” Respondent 30 agreed asserting “I felt no sympathy or empathy and that there is indeed a stigma of mental health supported by my teachers which did mean a very reluctant and difficult return to study.”

Peers and Student Connections are Important

Students appreciated staff who created opportunities for students to connect with other students. Simple things like ensuring students are introduced and talk with each other in class made a difference. Activities, like seminar days where students were also valued as respondent one said “promoting increased connection between students, within and between programs, is absolutely vital” (Respondent 21).

Students at the participating institution experience several courses early in first year which are shared with many programs. While this offers students an opportunity to meet a wide range of students many respondents talked about feeling frustration when they never saw these students again. Alongside this, students claimed they never met members of their own cohort until quite late in their program with Respondent 36 stating, “I didn't meet most of my cohort until 3rd or 4th year due to being paired with (students from Program 'u') for most classes.”

Discussion

While there is a significant body of work from the U.S. about the sophomore slump and a growing appreciation in Australia, this body of work is largely underdeveloped. Thus far reports focus on the idea of second year as a kind of “nowhere” year, requiring students to re-engage when first year supports are removed. The findings from this research suggest that the re-engagement discourse of the sophomore slump reflects only one aspect of the challenges faced by staff and students in courses beyond the first year of study. In this study, there were synergies between the findings from staff and students; particularly highlighting the challenge of ongoing transitions, whole of program design and the vital role of the teacher.

Similar to this study, Cohen (2015) and Crouse (2016) agree that the middle years of a program, particularly the second year, is a time of transition and that the lack of well-established transitional support strategies such as those provided in the first year of the study, leave students feeling less supported academically than first year students (Cohen, 2015), and therefore at risk of lowering their GPA (Crouse, 2016). In this study students indicated that first year had prepared them for ongoing study yet certain cohorts of students including school leavers and those entering through STAT or foundation pathways, reported that the support in second year was not enough. This is especially relevant as content increases in difficulty as students' progress through the program (Gahagan & Hunter, 2008), and particularly where students experience placement or work integrated learning activities for the first time (Altiok & Üstün, 2013). This finding also suggests that the way in which students enter university should be considered. It would be helpful to explore this further to identify the specific cohort needs as they move through university life. Gregory et al. (2013) recommend developing a holistic transition strategy to support students throughout their university journey inclusive of the student's background and pathway to tertiary study.

Macaskill (2018) questioned whether first year transition strategies provided too much support and consequently the reduced transitional support in second year left students feeling abandoned by the institution after a positive first year. D'Arcangelo (2013) suggested that the issues of retention in first year have been moved to the second year, and that in line with transitional support in first year, that second year should also have targeted transition support. This raises concerns that university implementation of first year transition pedagogies may have been too narrowly focused on increasing first year retention rather

than preparing students for the increased demands that come later in the program (Macaskill, 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2015). This study provides some support for this proposition, but the authors note that many students did not utilise formal support programs available and seemed unaware of the curriculum design affordances made by first year courses to aid their transition into university. Deeply embedded but hidden programmatic scaffolds and specific first year supports may lead some students to be overconfident early in their program of study.

The issue of staff teaching without knowledge of other courses speaks to a number of complex areas such as a lack of programmatic approaches being available or known to staff, a lack of certainty of how students move through the program and coherent or accessible curriculum mapping. While staff and students both acknowledge the second year as an issue, the data from this study suggest staff locate the problem as a student issue and students locate the problems as a staff issue. It would be more helpful to position these challenges as a program and/or curriculum issue and needs to be addressed in a principled manner in much the same way transition pedagogy has framed first year. Designing curriculum away from ideas like the “year of study” toward a holistic approach to design and delivery based on students moving through a series of transitions may be helpful. O'Donnell et al. (2015) describe a similar process of curriculum renewal at Wollongong University which may be helpful.

Lastly, there is evidence that when teaching staff were mindful of these challenges there tended to be a shared approach to addressing the issues. Both staff and students in this study recognised the importance of a caring teacher to student success beyond first year. This is supported in several studies that attribute the willingness of academic staff to help alongside inspirational teaching, contribute to a sense of belonging and a positive experience of students (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Su & Wood, 2012,). Whilst the relevance and impact of caring behaviours in university are under researched, there is a growing field of study exploring compassion pedagogy in education. Gibbs (2017) advocates that compassion should be woven into the ethos of higher education institutions and that universities as “caregiving” organisations, may be well placed to enrich the lives of students and better assist them to learn.

Limitations

This study had several limitations, primarily that it was a small study undertaken at one university. In this study, the definition of a first year course was any course that was designated as part of the first year curriculum. Consequently, the survey may have excluded students who had been at the University longer than one year but who were taking first year courses. Staff and students that chose to be involved may be more likely to have experienced challenges and this may have affected our findings. Finally, it was not possible to quantify a response rate as there was no way of measuring how many students received the invitation.

Conclusion

A whole of program approach to transition in terms of the student journey may be required to ensure that aspects of student learning, intended to be supported and addressed by a proper implementation of transition pedagogy, are not unintendedly “kicked down the road” and become road blocks later in the program. Whilst whole of program approaches are not new, there may be new implications caused by the nexus of flexible pathways through programs, transition pedagogy and the focus on rates of first year retention as ‘the’ measure of success at the expense of issues later in the program. Finally, caring teachers remain a key component to student success throughout university and that consideration of compassion pedagogy within the higher education system should be explored further.

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