

2011 UNIVERSITY ANNUAL LEARNING & TEACHING CONFERENCE
Changing Times: Refreshing the Learning & Teaching Strategy

Theme: An International university

14:10 - 14:40

Overcoming barriers

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“We think the Learning & Teaching Strategy should consider the students’ reality in our reality.”

Abstract:

As an international university, we need to have an understanding of the challenges that international students face on arrival as well as an idea of their perspective as stakeholders, and that of their sponsors, their employers and their families.

Rebecca Reeder and **Campbell McPherson** will talk about strategies that have been developed to enable students to overcome these challenges whilst they are at a pre-sessional stage.

Rebecca Reeder will talk about the development of an Independent Learning Portfolio to encourage students to take more responsibility for their learning process. By teaming up Language Learning Advisers and tutors, it has been possible to create a joined up system enabling students to be supported in their independence.

Campbell McPherson will talk about the challenge posed by potential misunderstanding of the students’ new environment arising from misinterpretation of language and cultural symbolism. Arriving amidst potential autumn fogs and closing night, our international students soon face knocks at the door, bangs in the sky, fires down the road and a mysterious profusion of red plastic flowers. The significance and importance of these symbols and events may be difficult to understand, especially when communications are limited by language and weak social links.

This part of the presentation considers the potential for exploring these events as a means of facilitating understanding of the student’s new environment, and a tool in expanding vocabulary and analytical skills.