‘Begun is Two-Thirds Done’: Giving Flexible Learners A Head Start With A Suite Of Online Transition Tools For Supporting Student Success In Higher Education

T&L DCU NIDL Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IT Sligo An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach

OLC Accelerate

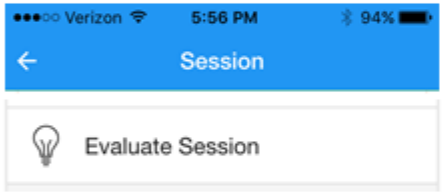
ACCELERATING ONLINE LEARNING ***WORLDWIDE***

ONLINE LEARNING™ CONSORTIUM

#OLCACCELERATE • NOVEMBER 16-18, 2016

WALT DISNEY WORLD SWAN & DOLPHIN RESORT • ORLANDO, FL

Session Evaluations Contest



- **Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app**
- **Navigate to specific session to evaluate**
- **Click "Evaluate Session" at the bottom of session details screen**
- **Complete session evaluation***

Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry
Five (5) $25 gift cards will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website

(As part of our "green" initiatives, OLC is no longer using paper forms for session evaluations.)

**Contact information required for contest entry but will not be shared with the presenters. Winners will be contacted post-conference.*

‘Begun is Two-Thirds Done’: Giving Flexible Learners A Head Start With A Suite Of Online Transition Tools For Supporting Student Success In Higher Education

T&L DCU NIDL Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IT Sligo An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach

NIDL
National Institute
for Digital Learning

DCU

National Institute for Digital Learning

THE ONE HUNDRED UNDER FIFTY

ECIU CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL THINKING

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
TOP 50 UNDER 50

DCU Connected

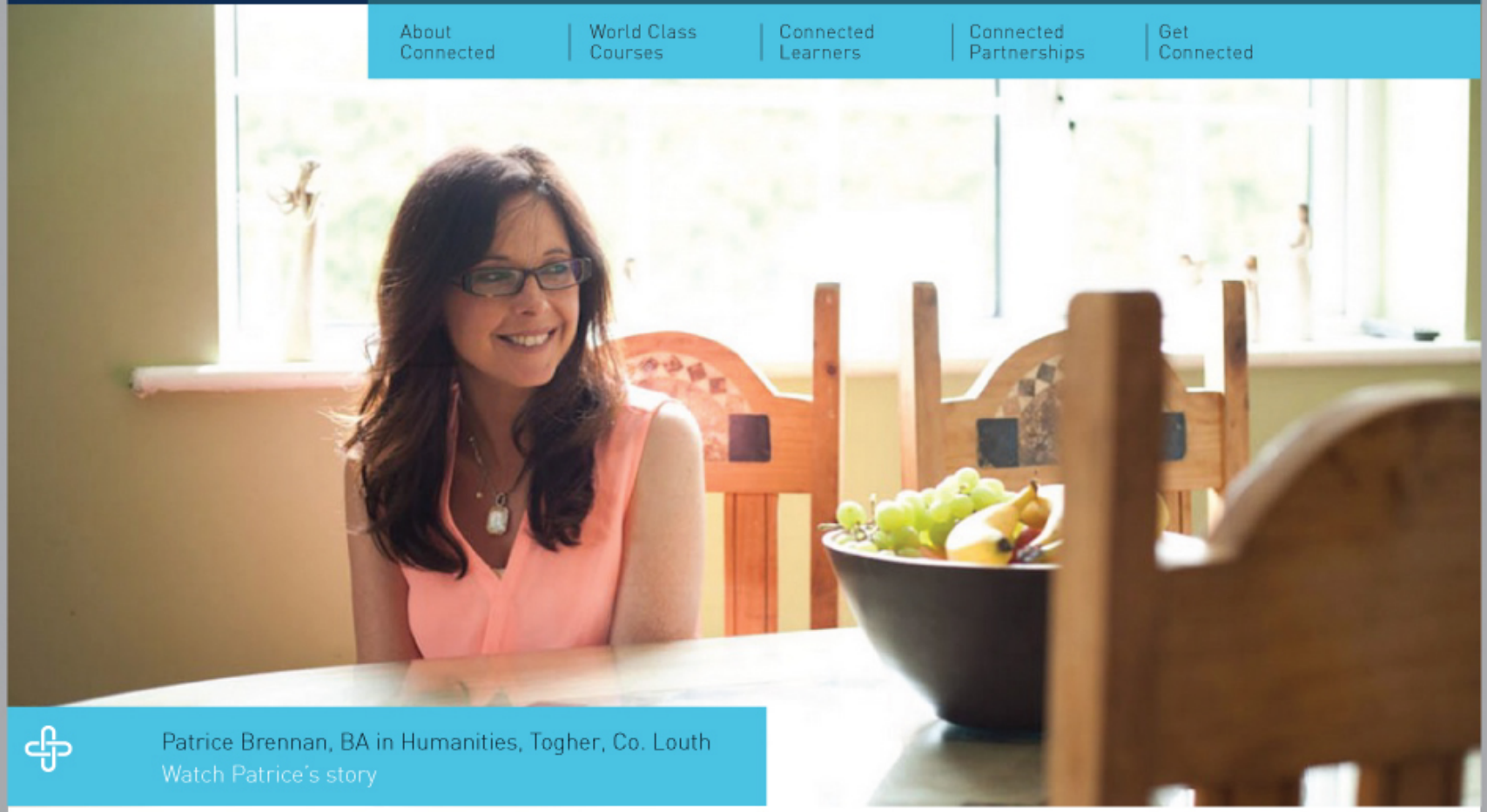
A quality education, wherever you are

DCU Connected

A quality education, wherever you are

Visit the **Dublin City University** website

About Connected | World Class Courses | Connected Learners | Connected Partnerships | Get Connected



Patrice Brennan, BA in Humanities, Togher, Co. Louth
Watch Patrice's story

Whether you live in Sligo, Seville or Shanghai, DCU Connected provides access to world-class online education, international expertise and locally relevant courses designed to meet your

Find out more about connected and DCU

DCU Connected

A quality education, wherever you are

Visit the Dublin City University webs

About Connected | World Class Courses | Connected Learners | Connected Partnerships | Get Connected

- Introduction
- Case Studies
- Become a Partner

DCU has a number of strategic partners. These partnerships provide a key point of difference to DCU Connected as they help to extend the range of study options. We expect to expand the number of these partnerships over the next year or so, although at DCU we are very particular about who we choose to partner with as we will not compromise on our reputation for academic excellence.

DCU

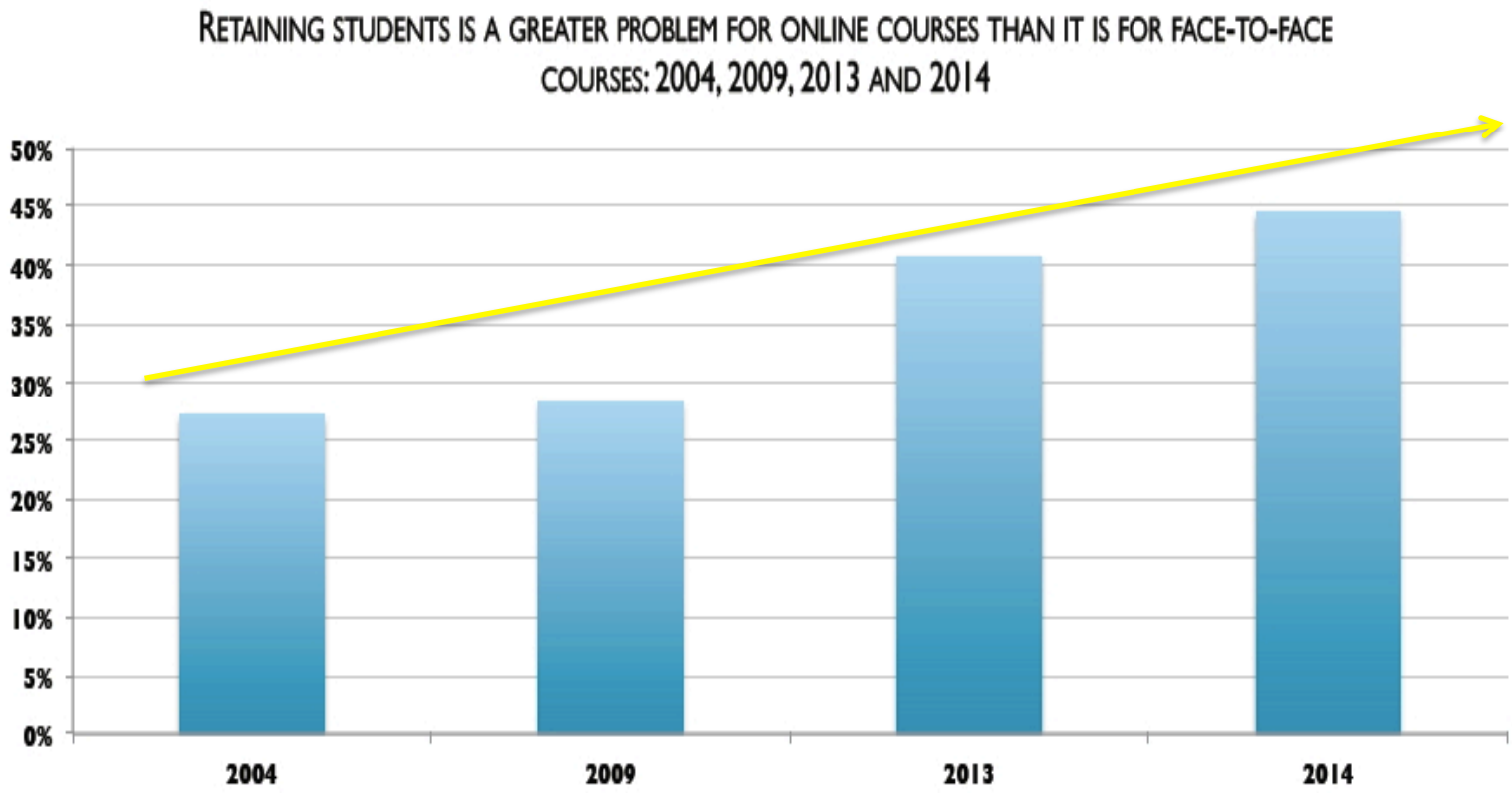
Connected Partners
Case Studies

ASU

DCU & ASU
Joint leadership & blended learning in delivering the next generation of biomedical diagnosticians.
More

The Problem

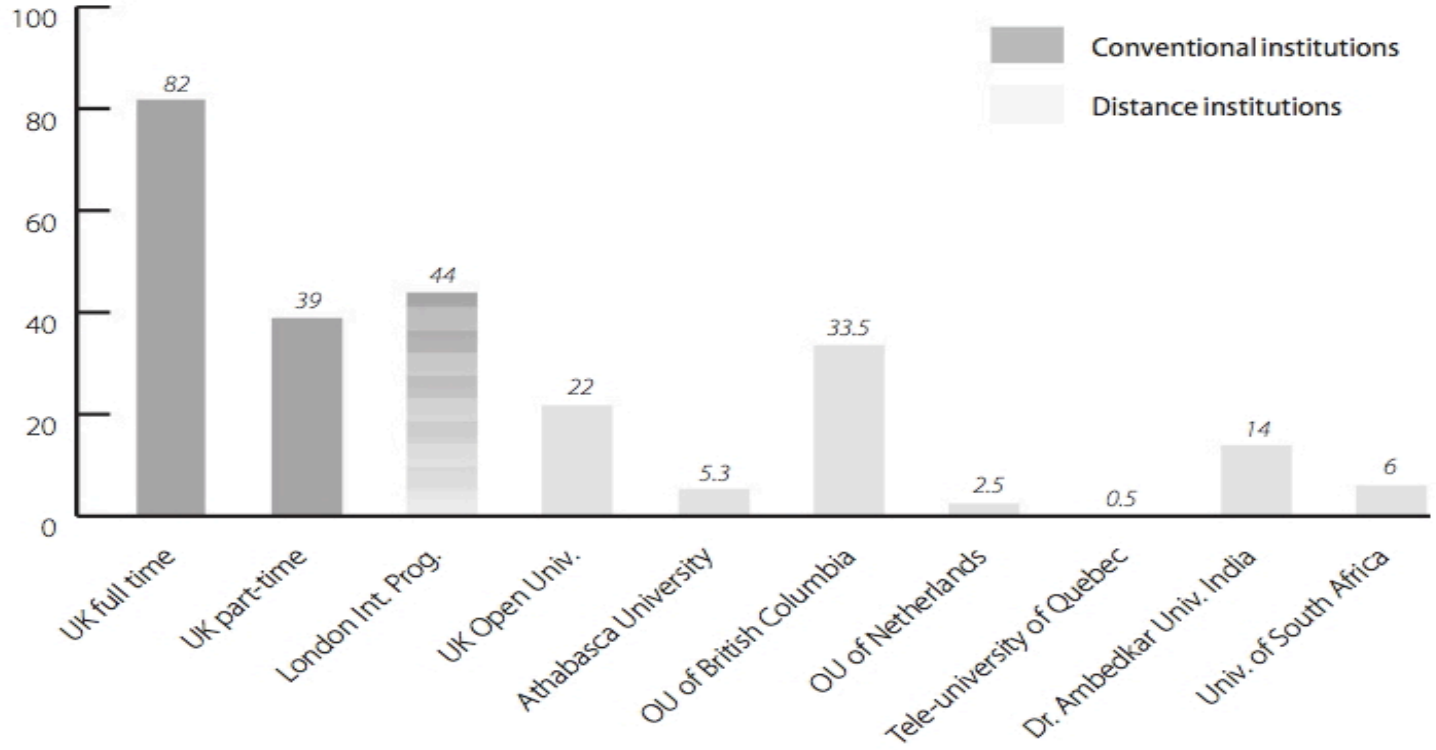
The Problem



Allan, I., & Seaman, J. (2015). *Grade level: Tackling online education in the United States.* Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group, LLC.

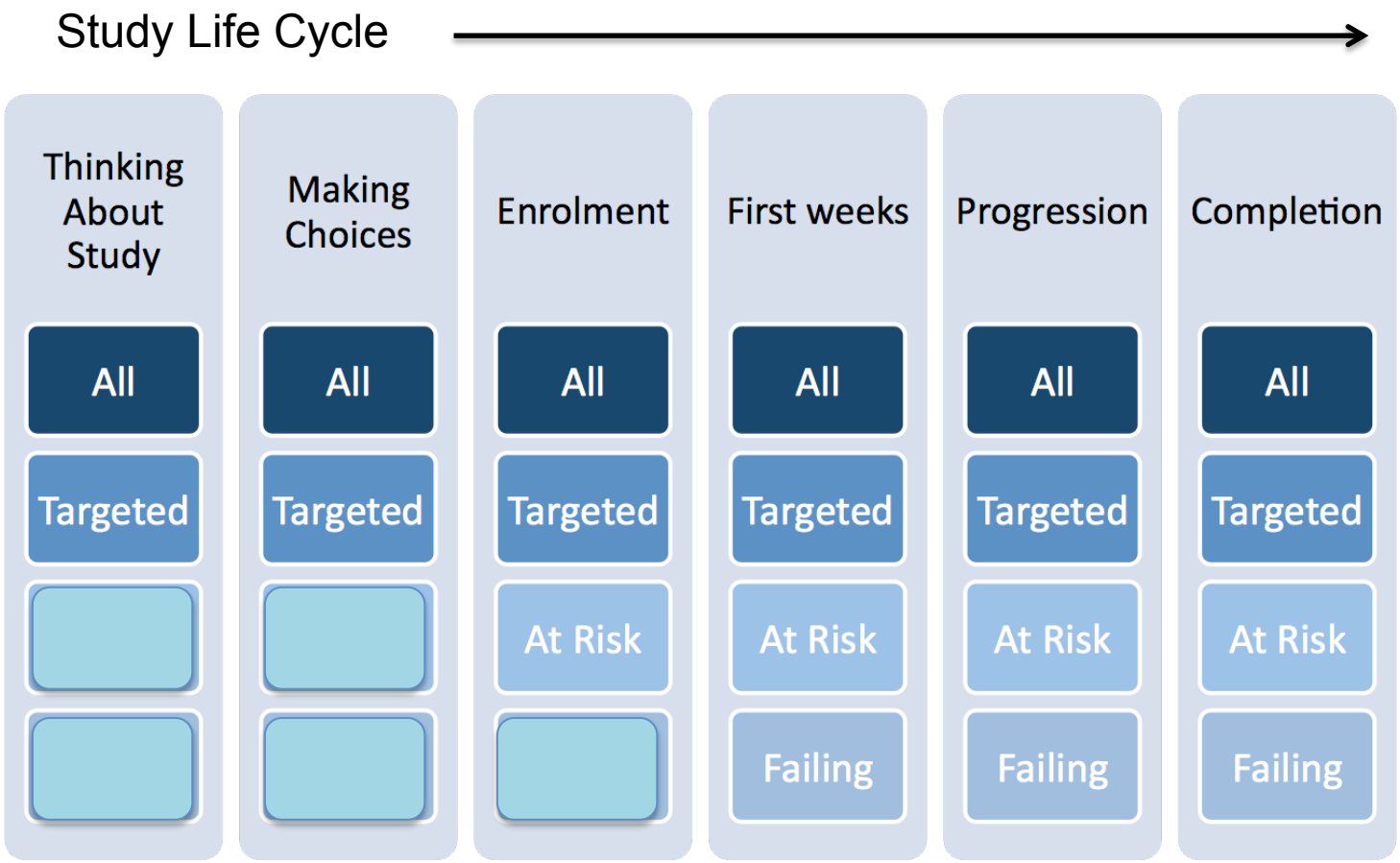
The Problem

Figure 17.1 Graduation rates at distance education and conventional institutions.



Woodley, A., & Simpson, O. (2014). Student dropout: The elephant in the room (pp. 459-483). In O. Zawacki-Richter & T. Anderson (Eds.). *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda.* Athabasca: AU Press.

The Gap

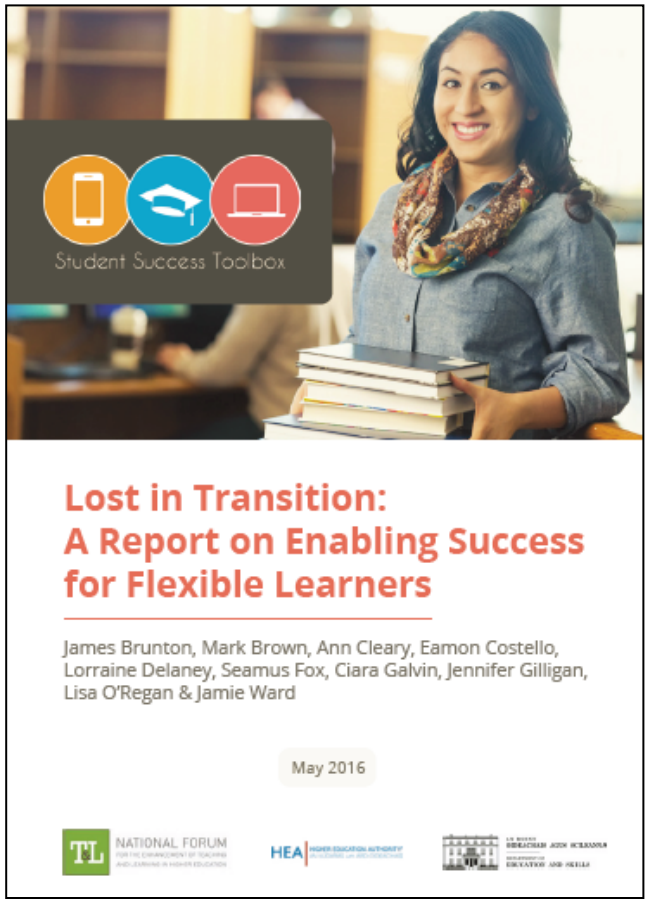

Study Life Cycle
Thinking About Study
Making Choices
Enrolment
First weeks
Progression
Completion
All
Targeted
At Risk
Failing

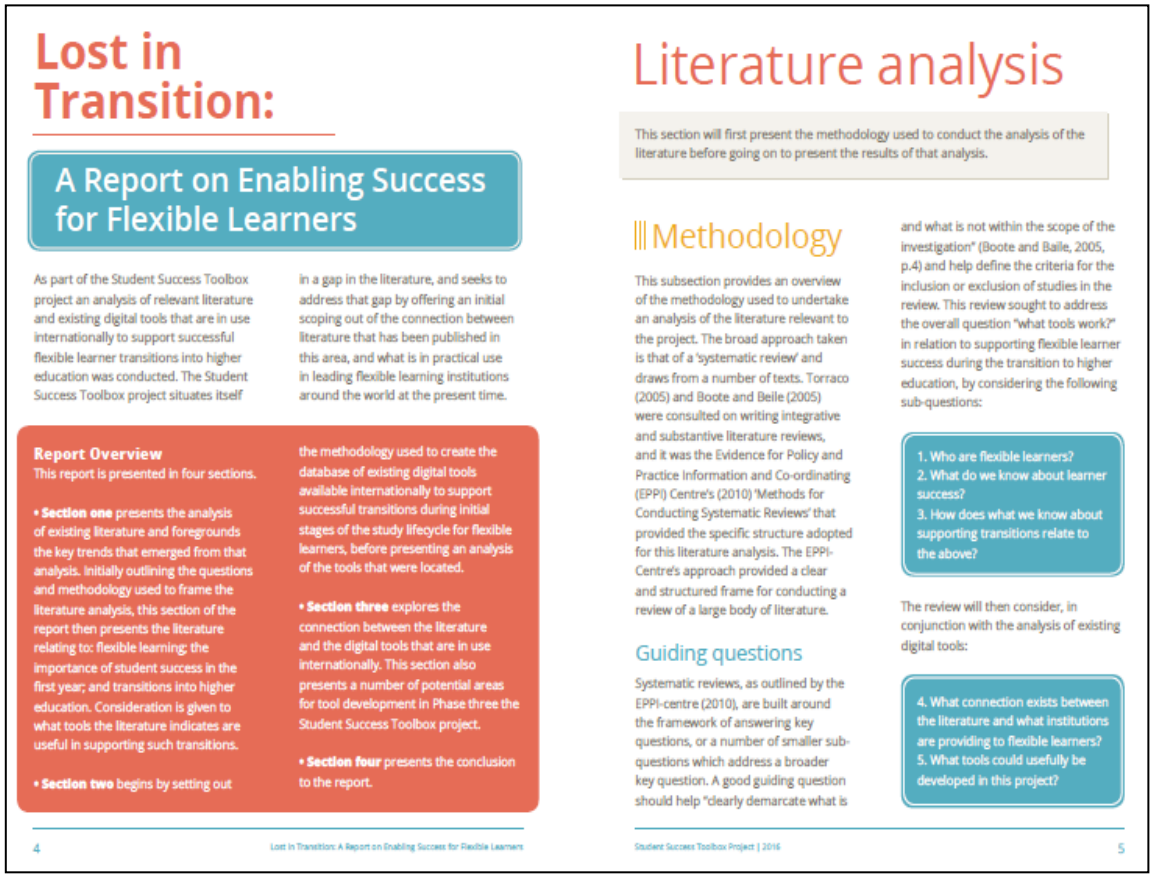
About the Project

Key Outcomes

1. Undertake synthesis of literature
2. Investigate existing tools in use
3. Develop eight digital readiness tools
4. Provide guidance and disseminate tools

Outcomes 1 & 2





Lost in Transition:

A Report on Enabling Success for Flexible Learners

As part of the Student Success Toolbox project an analysis of relevant literature and existing digital tools that are in use internationally to support successful flexible learner transitions into higher education was conducted. The Student Success Toolbox project situates itself in a gap in the literature, and seeks to address that gap by offering an initial scoping out of the connection between literature that has been published in this area, and what is in practical use in leading flexible learning institutions around the world at the present time.

Report Overview
This report is presented in four sections.

- **Section one** presents the analysis of existing literature and foregrounds the key trends that emerged from that analysis. Initially outlining the questions and methodology used to frame the literature analysis, this section of the report then presents the literature relating to: flexible learning; the importance of student success in the first year; and transitions into higher education. Consideration is given to what tools the literature indicates are useful in supporting such transitions.
- **Section two** begins by setting out the methodology used to create the database of existing digital tools available internationally to support successful transitions during initial stages of the study lifecycle for flexible learners, before presenting an analysis of the tools that were located.
- **Section three** explores the connection between the literature and the digital tools that are in use internationally. This section also presents a number of potential areas for tool development in Phase three the Student Success Toolbox project.
- **Section four** presents the conclusion to the report.

Literature analysis

This section will first present the methodology used to conduct the analysis of the literature before going on to present the results of that analysis.

Methodology

This subsection provides an overview of the methodology used to undertake an analysis of the literature relevant to the project. The broad approach taken is that of a 'systematic review' and draws from a number of texts. Torraco (2005) and Boote and Beile (2005) were consulted on writing integrative and substantive literature reviews, and it was the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating (EPPI) Centre's (2010) 'Methods for Conducting Systematic Reviews' that provided the specific structure adopted for this literature analysis. The EPPI-Centre's approach provided a clear and structured frame for conducting a review of a large body of literature.

Guiding questions

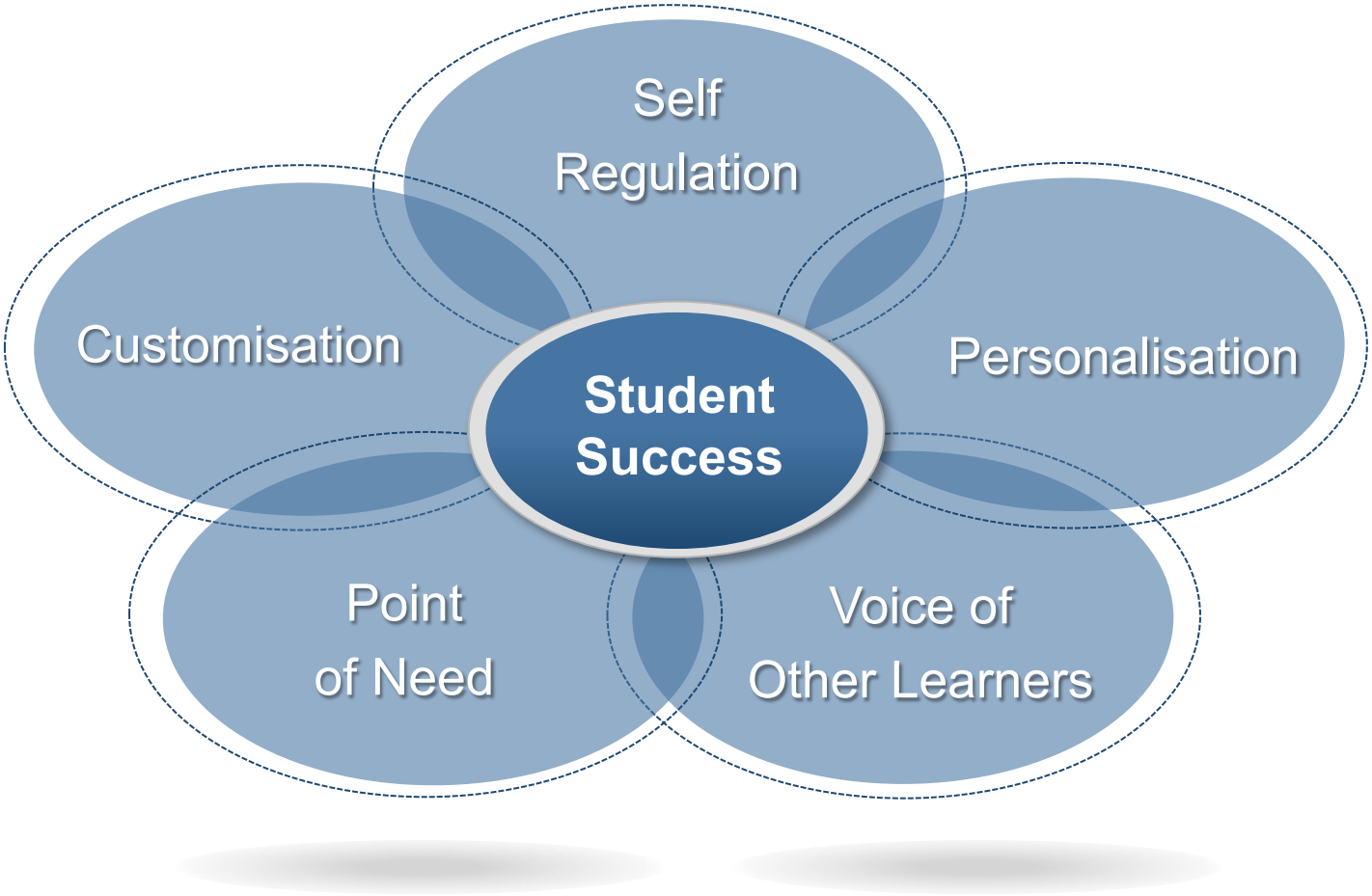
Systematic reviews, as outlined by the EPPI-centre (2010), are built around the framework of answering key questions, or a number of smaller sub-questions which address a broader key question. A good guiding question should help "clearly demarcate what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation" (Boote and Baile, 2005, p.4) and help define the criteria for the inclusion or exclusion of studies in the review. This review sought to address the overall question "what tools work?" in relation to supporting flexible learner success during the transition to higher education, by considering the following sub-questions:

1. Who are flexible learners?
2. What do we know about learner success?
3. How does what we know about supporting transitions relate to the above?

The review will then consider, in conjunction with the analysis of existing digital tools:

4. What connection exists between the literature and what institutions are providing to flexible learners?
5. What tools could usefully be developed in this project?

Key Principles



Outcome 3: The Toolbox

Student Success Toolbox

- Home
- Project Overview
- Project Partners
- Publications
- The Toolbox
- Events
- Blog
- Contact Us

The Toolbox

Tool 1: Am I Ready for Study?

Tool 2: Do I Have Enough Time?

Tool 3: Who Can I Ask?

Tool 4: My Computer Skills

Tool 5: My First Assignment

Tool 6: Head Start Online: First Steps To Flexible Study

Tool 7: Study Tips For Me

Tool 8: Online Orientation

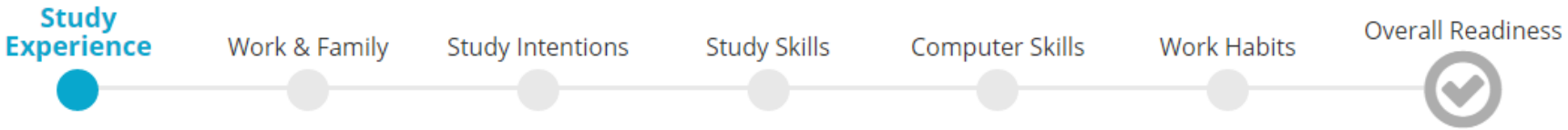
Am I Ready for Study?

Take the quiz...

This tool helps you to self-assess how ready you are for further study and offers personal advice based on your responses. It won't take much of your time as there are only five sets of questions which are easy to complete, so try it! The results are a GUIDE only and entirely confidential to you.

START

Am I Ready for Study?



Answer the questions below about your previous study experience, then click CONTINUE to receive personal feedback...

1 Do you have previous successful experience of studying through a higher education institution?

YES NO

2 Have you had any recent experience of flexible learning, including undertaking a free online short course?

YES NO

3 Are you familiar with the requirements of your intended programme of study?

Am I Ready for Study?

Study Experience | Work & Family | Study Intentions | Study Skills | Computer Skills | Work Habits | Overall Readiness

Your Feedback for "Study Experience"

1. Your previous experience should be a great help. Having an idea of what further study involves and how to go about it should help to get you off to a good start.

2. You might like to consider registering for a free online short course or MOOC in an area of interest as this may give you a better sense of what it's like to be a flexible learner.

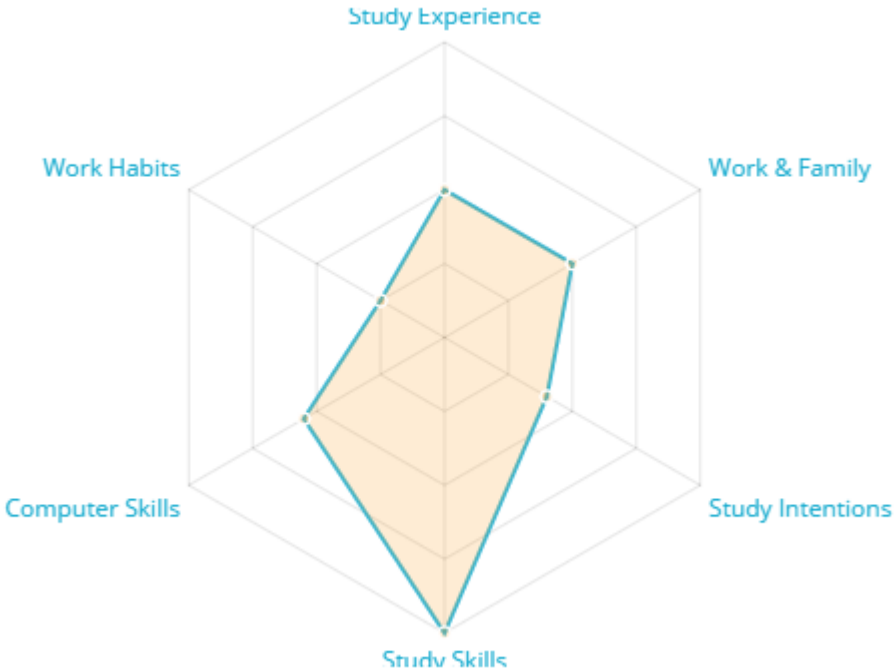
3. It's good that you've already sought information about your intended programme of study. Knowing the requirements is really important before you make any commitment.

"I found completing a MOOC helped to give me a better idea of what further study might involve

Am I Ready for Study?

Overall readiness

Here is an overall summary of your results. You can read this summary and all of your feedback by hitting on the **DOWNLOAD** button. Please give us your feedback on the usefulness of this tool by clicking on the **RATE** button.



Summary

You have something to think about! In some areas you're reasonably well placed to take on the challenge of further study but you could do more to enhance your readiness. Explore the resource links on this page and review all of your responses to see where you could enhance your ability to succeed before taking the next step. It may even be better to defer your study plans until your personal circumstances change. But don't give up on the idea and talk to someone at your preferred institution if you want further advice.

How Much Work is it?

Do I Have Enough TIME ?

This tool helps to calculate the amount of time you spend on different activities during a typical week and offers advice on how much study you could realistically undertake in your free time. The results are a GUIDE only.

START

How Much Work is it?

Allocate Your Time

Available time
3 hours

3 | 168

Work
48 hours
0 | 48 | 168
definition of Work — advanced

Family
26 hours
0 | 26 | 168
definition of Family — advanced

Household
20 hours
0 | 20 | 168
definition of Household — advanced

Hobbies
14 hours
0 | 14 | 168
definition of Hobbies — advanced

Leisure
18 hours
0 | 18 | 168
definition of Leisure — advanced

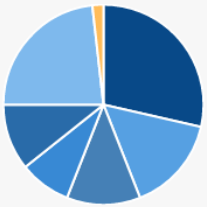
Sleep
39 hours
0 | 39 | 168
definition of Sleep — advanced

Reset all

Your Results

Here is an overall summary of your results for a typical week. Included is the amount of 'Available time' you have available for study each week.

168	-	165	=	3
Hours per week		Hours of activities		Available time



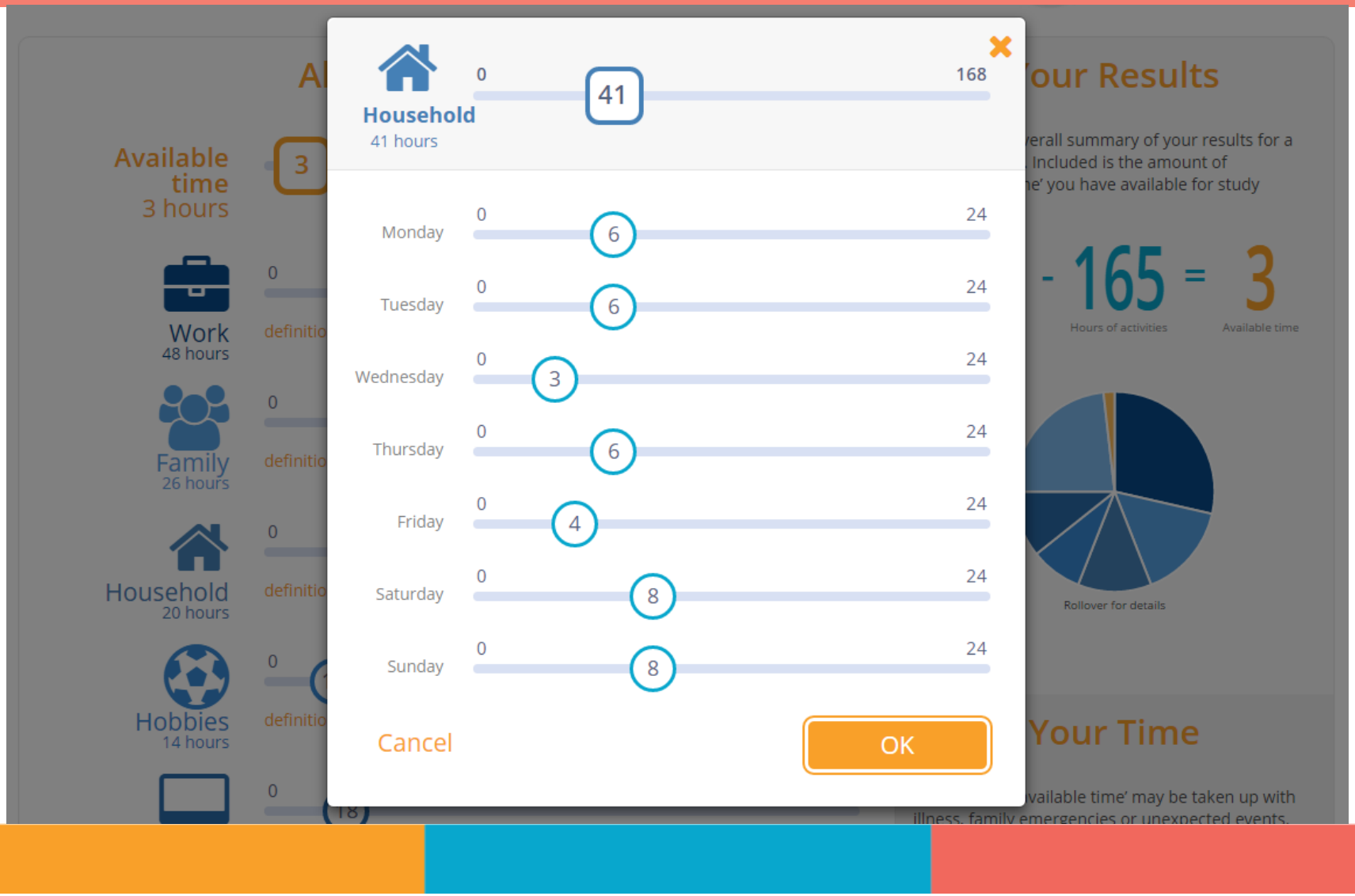
Rollover for details

Your Time

Some of your available time' may be taken up with illness, family emergencies or unexpected events. Click "NEXT" for more detailed feedback on the amount of study time you have available according to your circumstances.

NEXT

How Much Work is it?



How Much Work is it?

Detailed feedback...

You're just managing to fit all your activities in, with only a few hours left to spare. You're likely to need more free time to successfully undertake study. Discuss ways of freeing up time with your family. Keep in mind you'll have busy periods around assignments, tests and exams. Some weeks will be busier than others. While most courses are designed to require a minimum number of hours to complete, the actual time you need will vary. If you decide to continue, then before registering for your course we strongly encourage you to talk with the staff and check the requirements for the particular programme of study before going any further.

Student comments...

It was essential that my boss, partner and family were supportive to help me free up more time for study

— Student from *DCU*

With so many other commitments I needed to

Who Can I Ask?

Click a question *then* *view answers from:*

- I am not sure I will be able for this course
- I am struggling with the technology on this course
- I have no idea how to go about writing an assignment.
- My assignment is due next week and I'm not sure what I've written is ok.
- I have to work overtime unexpectedly so I just won't get my assignment done on time.

My Computer Skills

Select the student you identify most with by clicking on their story below.

> *I rarely use a computer and I am not sure if I have the computer skills that I will need for college. What do I need to know?*

Check My Computer Skills

> *I know how to use a computer but not sure ho for learning.*

> *You can take this **quiz** to identify any **Computer Skill** areas that you might need to improve on. You will be directed to some help if needed when you have finished and you can also print out the quiz if you like so that you have a record of your **Computer Skills**.*

> *I use computers everyday for work and I am c have the necessary computer skills for learning, ho*

START QUIZ

My First Assignment

Choose your level of experience on writing assignments below.
Read how other students with similar experience approached that first assignment.

? What are assignments?

Study Tips For Me

Revisit past exam papers

Study tip from Adam (IT student)

#studytip #examtips #submission

I would advise all students to go to the face to face tutorials and participate in the online tutorials too

Study tip from Melanie

(IT student)

#learninggoals #tutorials #submission

#studytip #timemanagement #onlinelearning #researchtips #submission

Keep up with the reading

Complete your reading on a weekly basis and manage your time well for assignments.

Study tip from Ryan

#assignments #readingtips #submission

Don't attempt assignments without a deep understanding of the module

Ask your Tutor

If the material is hard to understand at first, ask your tutor to explain it further

Study tip from Mary (Humanities student)

#learningtolearn #gettinghelp #askingforhelp #submission

Use your peers

Form study groups with other students- a few heads together may help with the

Apply what you learn to practical everyday work- that helps a great deal in understanding the module a whole lot better and everything tends to become clearer.

Study tip from Patrick (IT student)

#learningstyle #submission

Work Hard from the start!

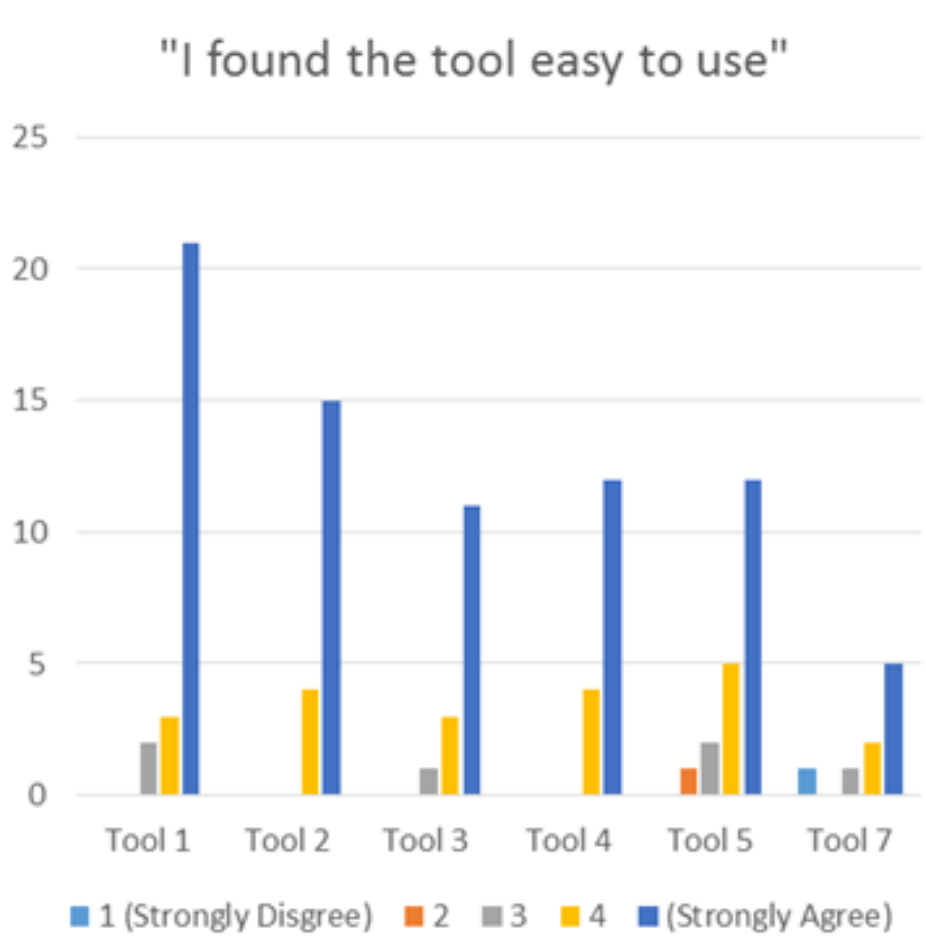
Online Orientation

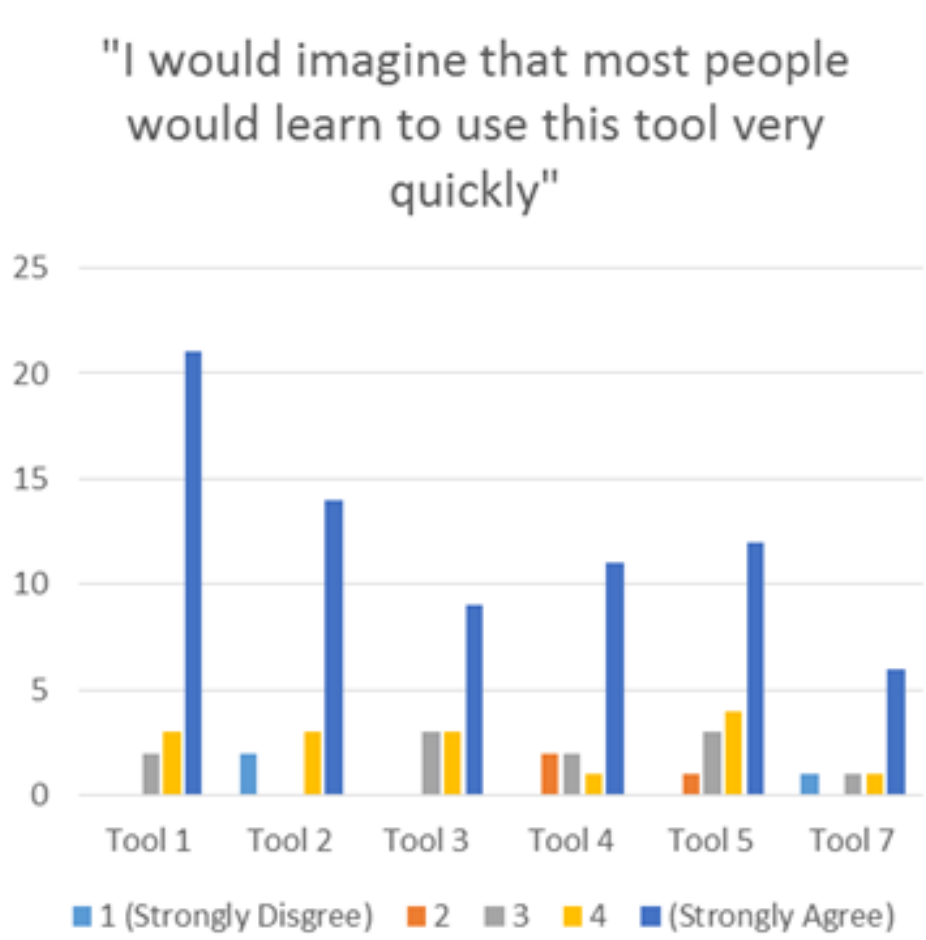
Elements of an Online Orientation

Each of the elements of online orientation shown below provide suggested approaches you can use in your own orientation. Click on a circle and work through each element. This will aid you in building a list of suggested content appropriate to your situation. Once you have worked through each of the elements, a final printable summary will be available by pressing the summary button below.

Delivery Methods:

Iterative Evaluation

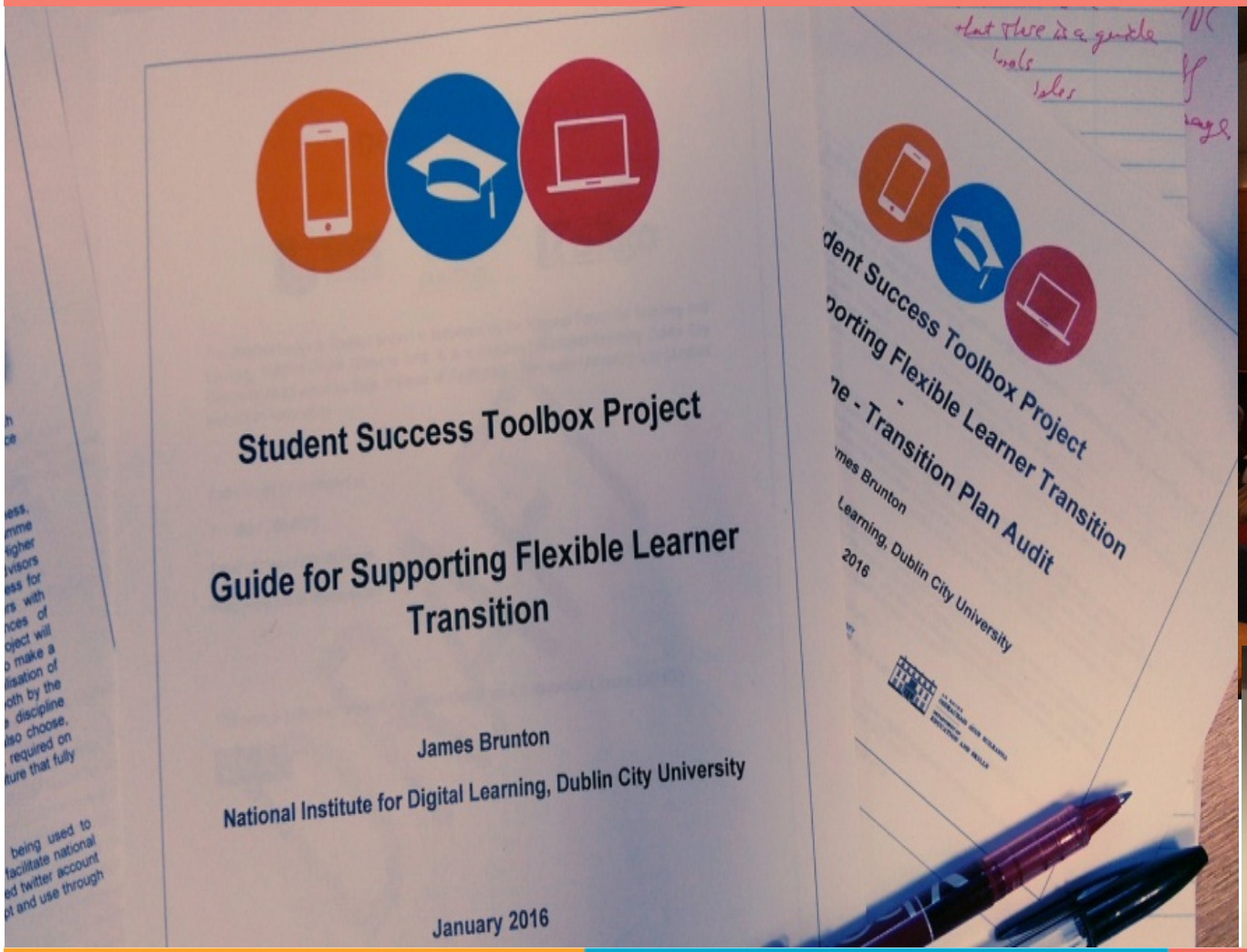




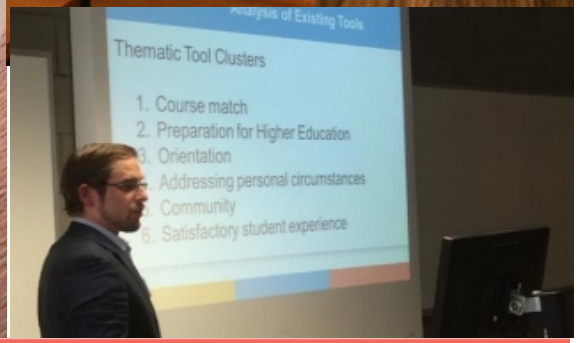
In Summary

Student Success Toolbox
DCU
NIDL
Maynooth University
DUNDALK
IT Sligo

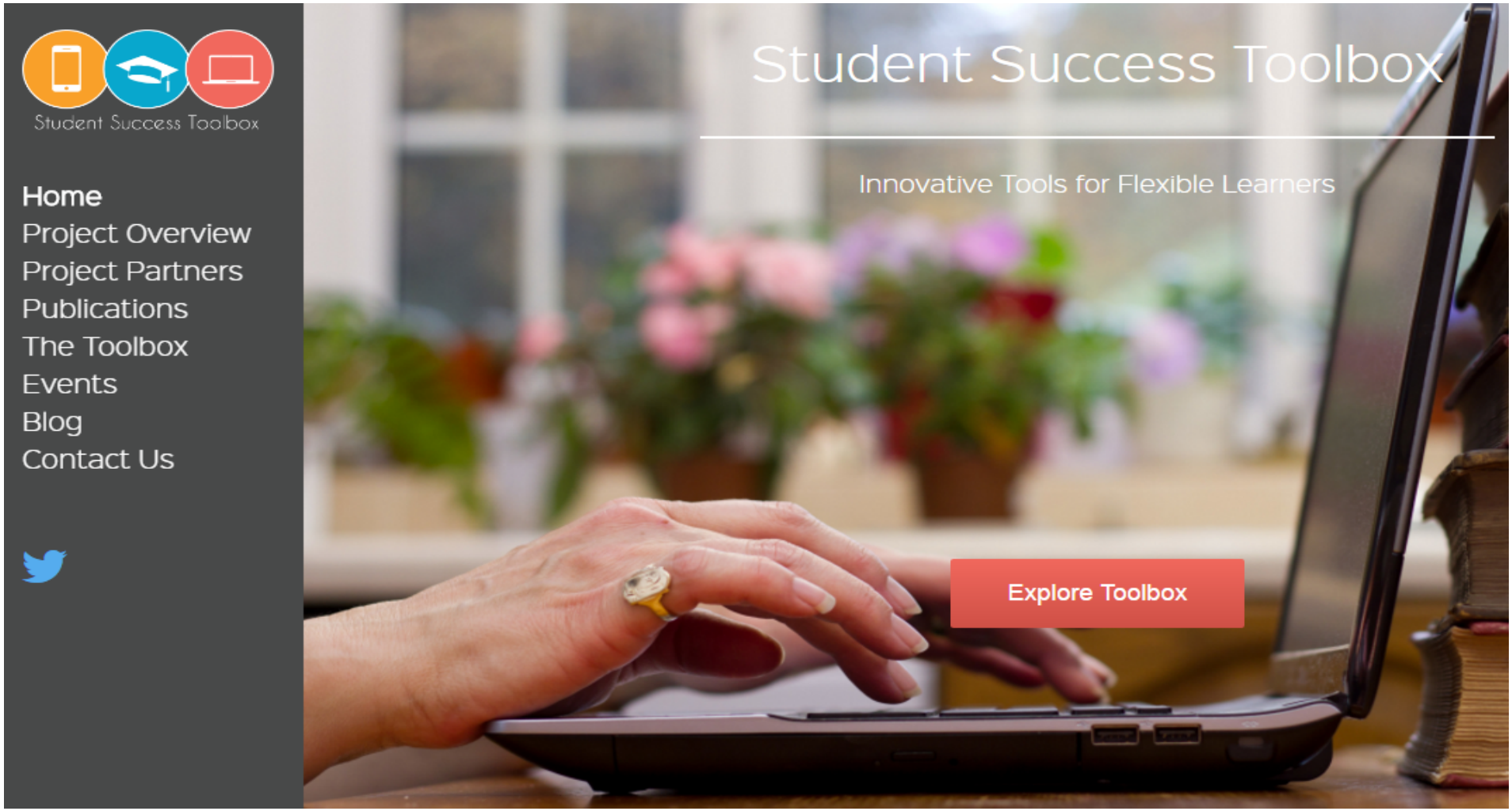
Outcome 4


Student Success Toolbox Project
Guide for Supporting Flexible Learner Transition
James Brunton
National Institute for Digital Learning, Dublin City University
January 2016

www.studentsuccess.ie


Thematic Tool Clusters
1. Course match
2. Preparation for Higher Education
3. Orientation
4. Addressing personal circumstances
5. Community
6. Satisfactory student experience

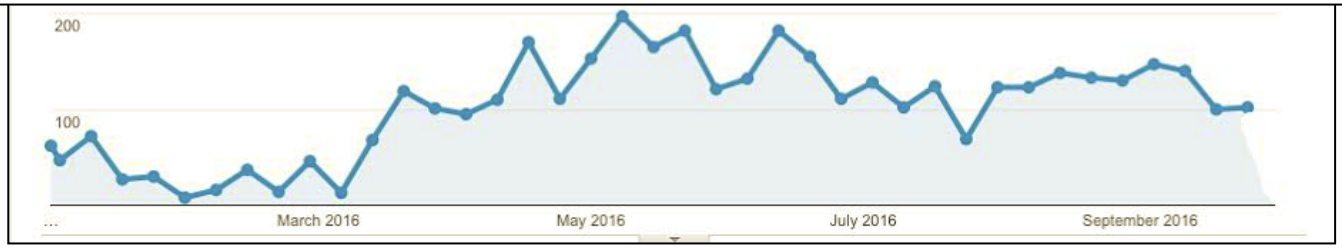
Impact – Outreach



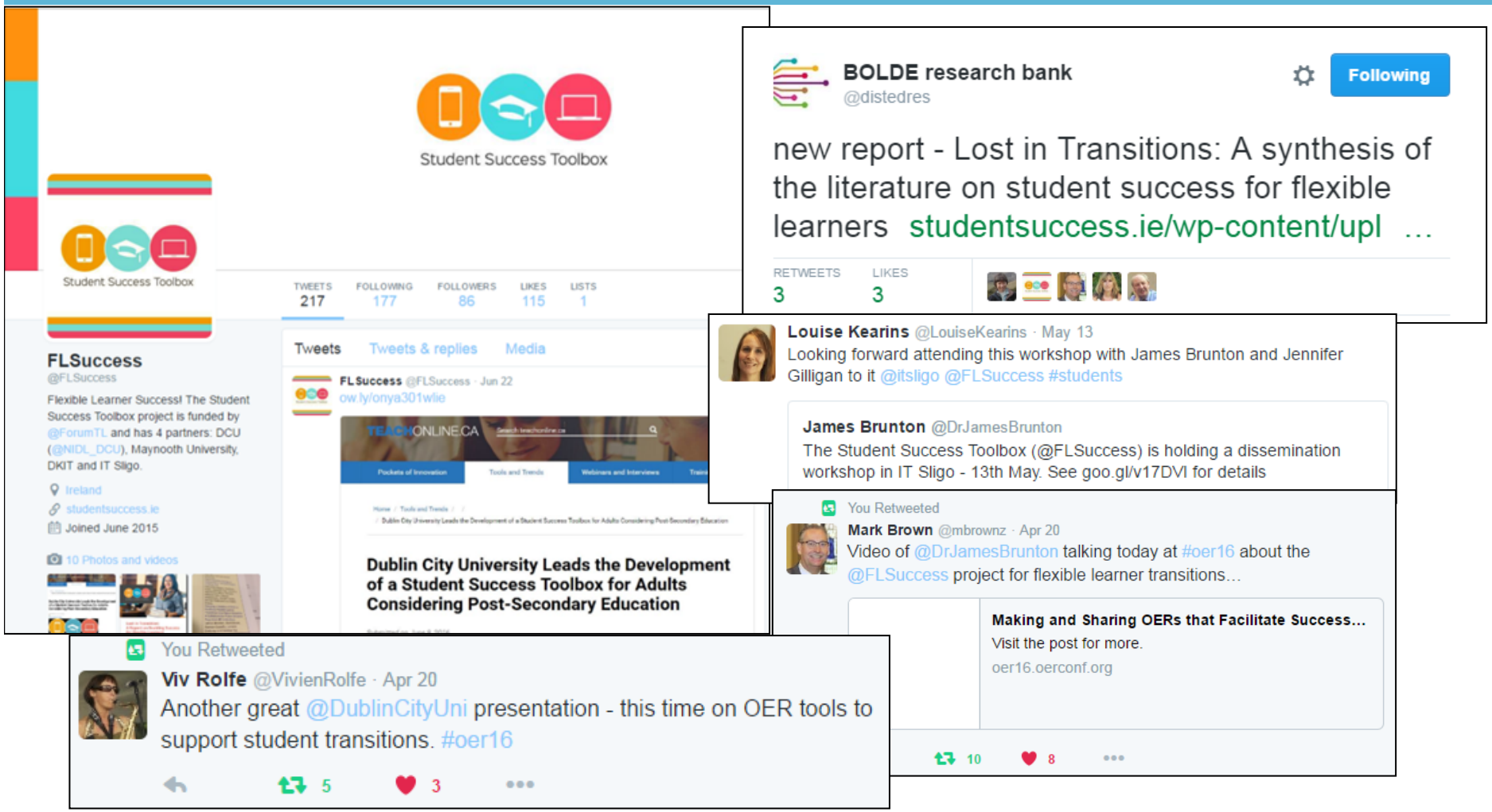
Impact – Outreach

Sessions	Users	Page Views	Pages/Session	Avg. Session Duration
All Users	All Users	All Users	All Users	All Users
5,755	4,460	12,103	2.10	00:01:16
Non-bounce Sessions	Non-bounce Sessions	Non-bounce Sessions	Non-bounce Sessions	Non-bounce Sessions
1,440	896	7,788	5.41	00:05:04

Bounce Rate	% New Sessions
All Users	All Users
74.98%	77.62%
Non-bounce Sessions	Non-bounce Sessions
0.00%	59.58%



Impact – Outreach

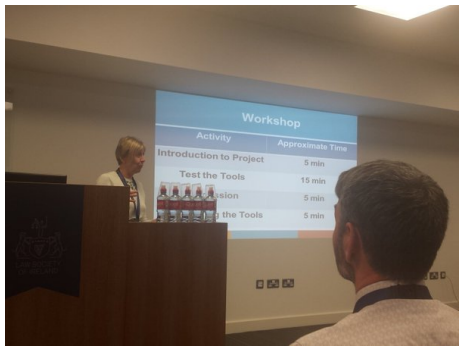


Impact – Outreach

Contact North Online Newsletter – Pockets of Innovation feature: Circulation list of over 11,000

Impact – Outreach

18 Scholarly Outputs



DCU DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY | EXPLORE DCU | STUDY AT DCU | RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT | INFO & SERVICES

National Institute for Digital Learning

- NIDL
- + About
- News
- + Events
- + People
- Open Education
- Teaching Enhancement
- Online Courses
- Open Learning Academy
- + Courses in Digital Learning
- Research Network
  - Overview
  - Members
  - Research Links

Research Outputs

Members of the Digital Learning Research Network are active in a wide range of research and development projects in the areas of digital, blended and online learning and every year produce an impressive number of publications and scholarly outputs.

2016 Outputs

Blin, F. (2016). Towards an 'ecological' CALL theory: theoretical perspectives and their instantiation in CALL research (Chapter 3). In F. Farr & L. Murray (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language learning and technology.* London: Routledge.

Blin, F., Jalkanen, J., & Taalas, P. (2016). Sustainable CALL development (Chapter 16). In F. Farr & L. Murray (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of language learning and technology.* London: Routledge.

Brown, M. (2016). MOOCs as social practice: A kaleidoscope of perspectives (pp.31-41). In E. De Corte, L. Enwall, & U. Teichler (Eds.). *From Books to MOOCs? Emerging models of learning and teaching in higher education.* Wenner-Gren International Series, 88. London: Portland Press.

Brown, M. (2016). Beyond the digital horizon: new learning platforms, old technology debates (Junhong Xiao trans.). *Distance Education in China*, 10, 5-13.

Head Start Online:
First Steps to Flexible Study

Head Start Online

What is it about?

Have you ever considered studying as a part-time or online learner? Do you have commitments in your life that would preclude you from studying on a full-time, campus-based course? Have you already decided to study, and want to know how to best prepare yourself?

Head Start Online is a free course for anyone who is thinking about starting a higher or continuing education course as a part-time or online learner.

Many people who want to study cannot do so by attending a full-time course that requires a lot of attendance on-campus. The reality is that people have busy lives where you have to balance work, social and family commitments.Learning part-time or online is one way to help fit study around your lifestyle. However, this more flexible approach to study is not for everyone. This course offers a taste of what is involved as an online learner.

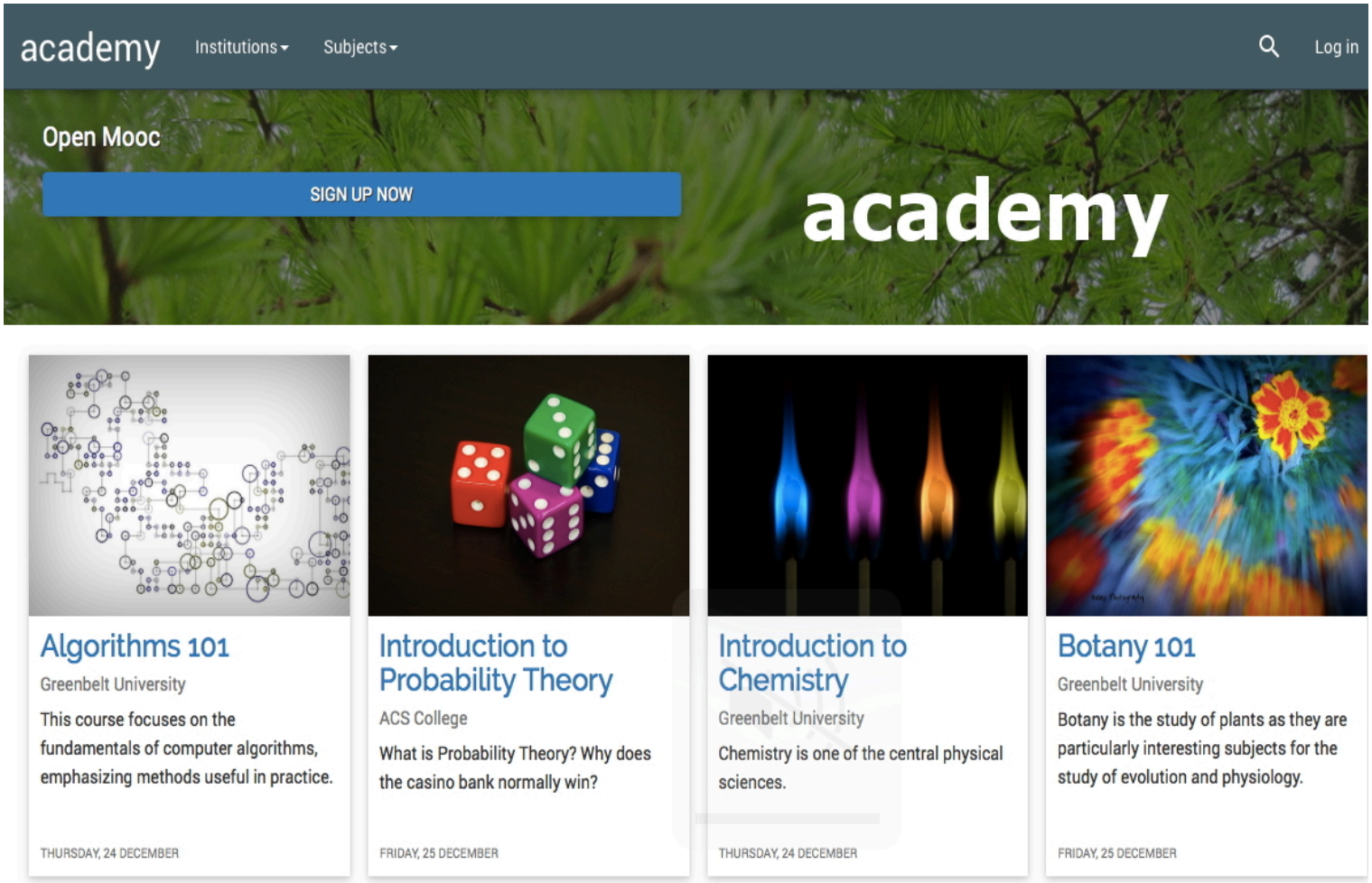
Whether you are trying to figure out if you are ready to start a higher education course, or you just want to know how to best prepare yourself for part-time or online study, then this course is for you.

What will I learn?

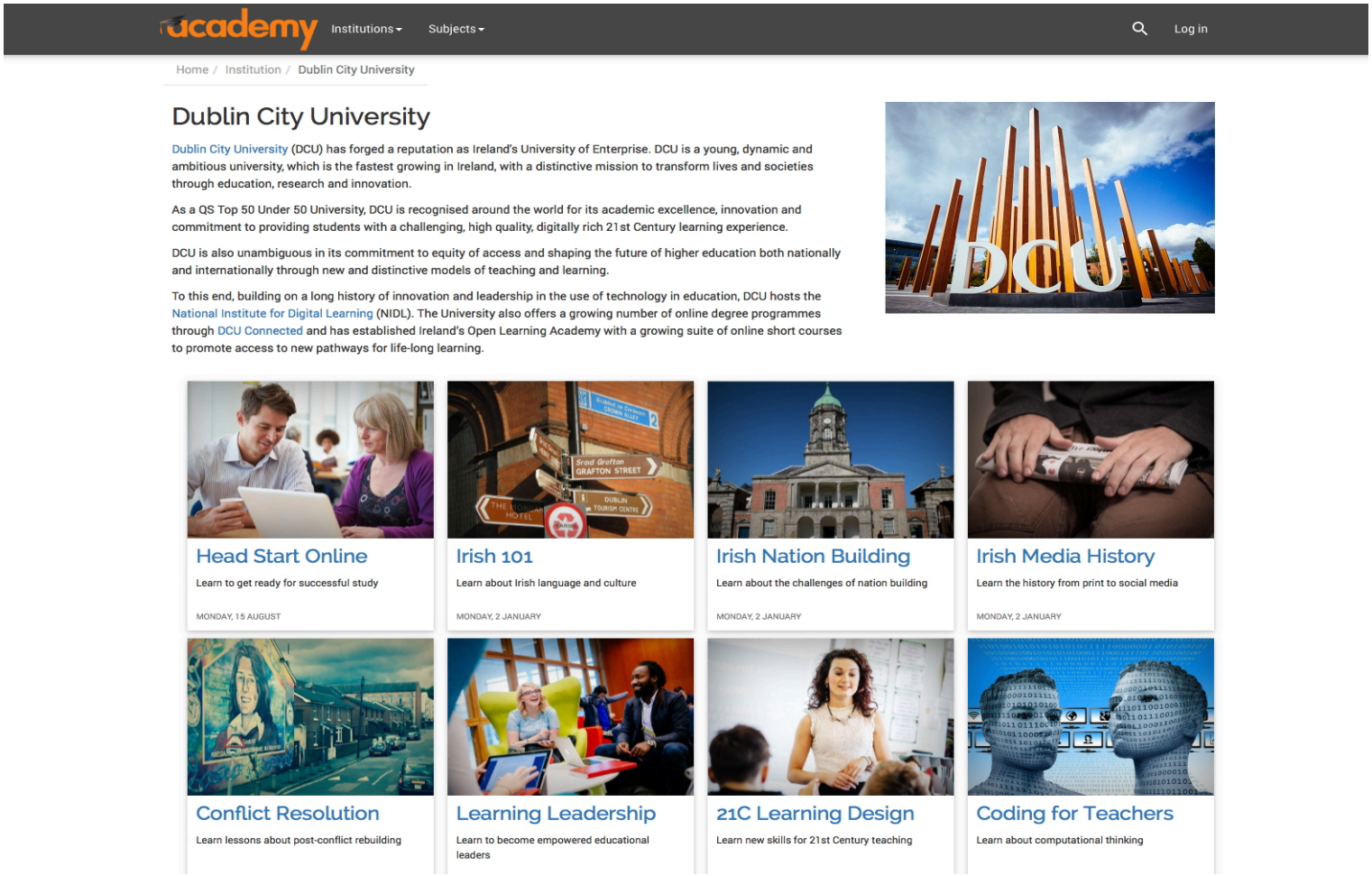
On completion of this course you will:

Decide if part-time or online higher education is for you
Know how much time you have for study
Identify your potential sources of support
Be aware of the skills needed to be successful

Academy Platform



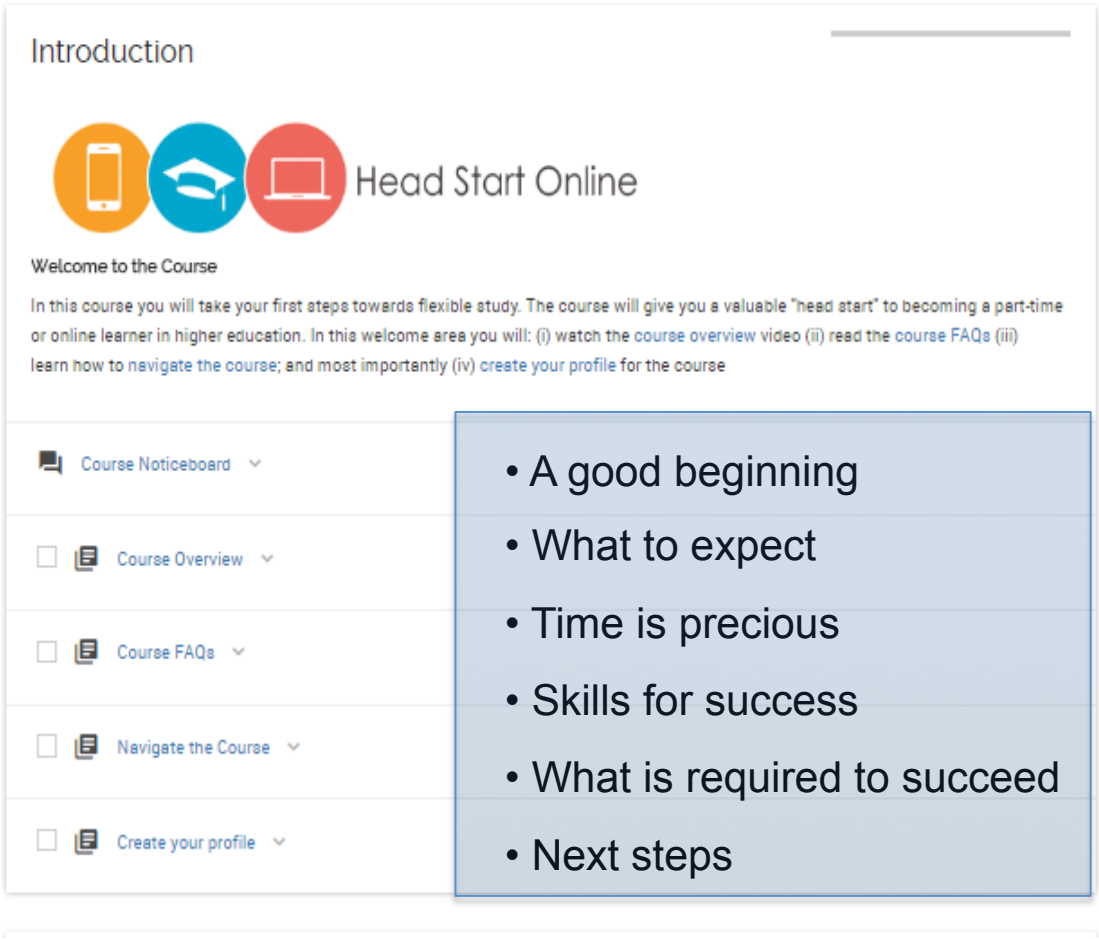
Academy Platform



http://www.dcu.ie/academy

Head Start Online:
First Steps to Flexible Study

MOOC Structure



MOOC Activities

Question 1

Not yet answered Marked out of 1 Flag question Edit question

As far as deciding on studying, or not, and what subject to study, I Choose... What I most want from this five week course is for it to Choose...

In terms of any previous experience with this kind of endeavour I Choose... previously studied at higher education level (college, university, etc.).

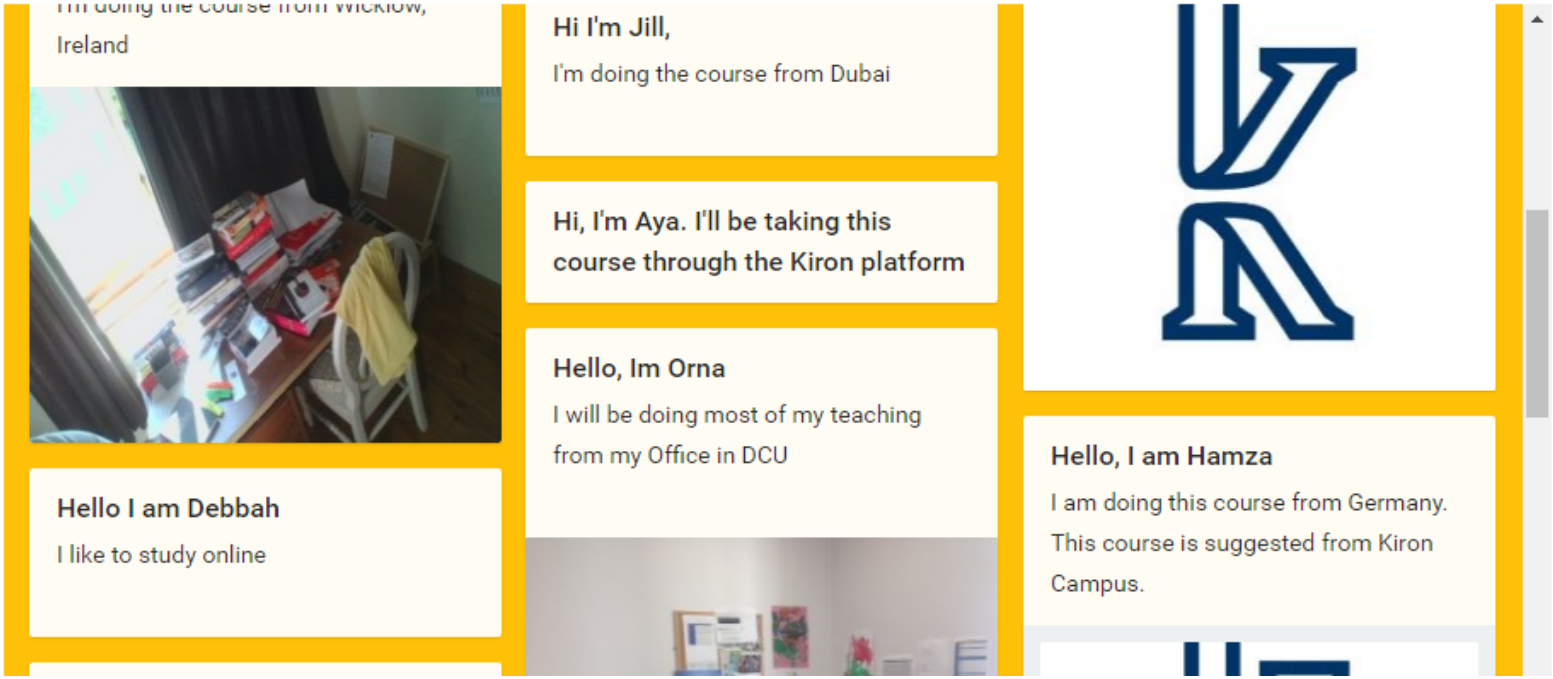
There are Choose... time consuming areas in my life that I will need to manage along with my studies. In terms of the 'big two', work and family, I Choose... and Choose... . Also about me: I identify my gender as Choose... and my age is in the Choose... range.

MOOC Activities

Where Will You Study?

On the virtual noticeboard in this activity you can show a photo of the study space, room, oil rig etc. where you are viewing the course.

Tip: The easiest way to do this, once you have clicked on the pink button (circle with the plus symbol), is to give your name in the 'title' area and then click the row of symbols to upload your photo (or audio/video clip if you like.



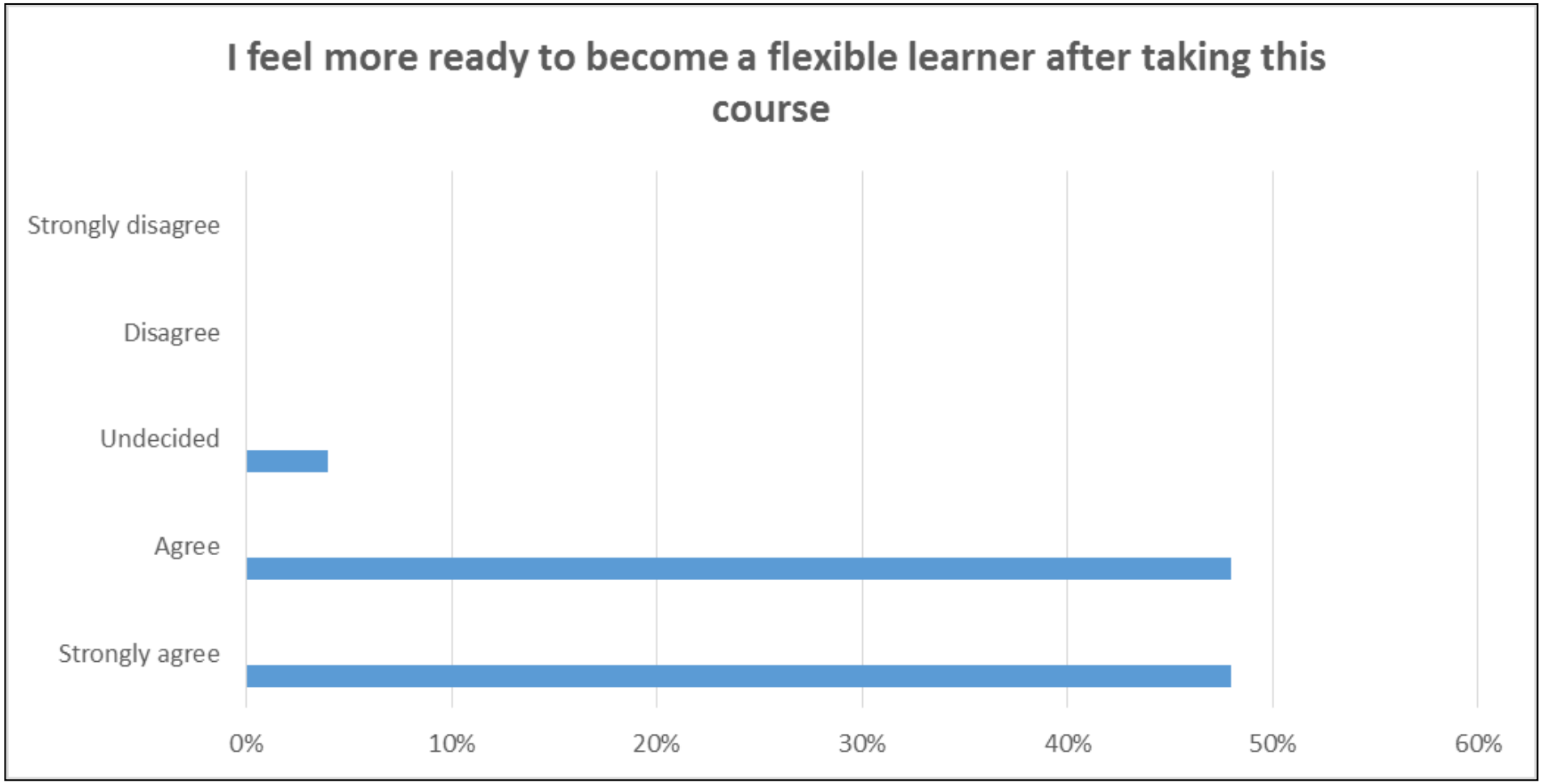
MOOC Activities

Now watch this video (2 min 58 sec) where Dr Anne Markey, who is a graduate from a flexible learning programme and has subsequently worked as
years, talks about the typical fears and anxieties that flexible learners have.

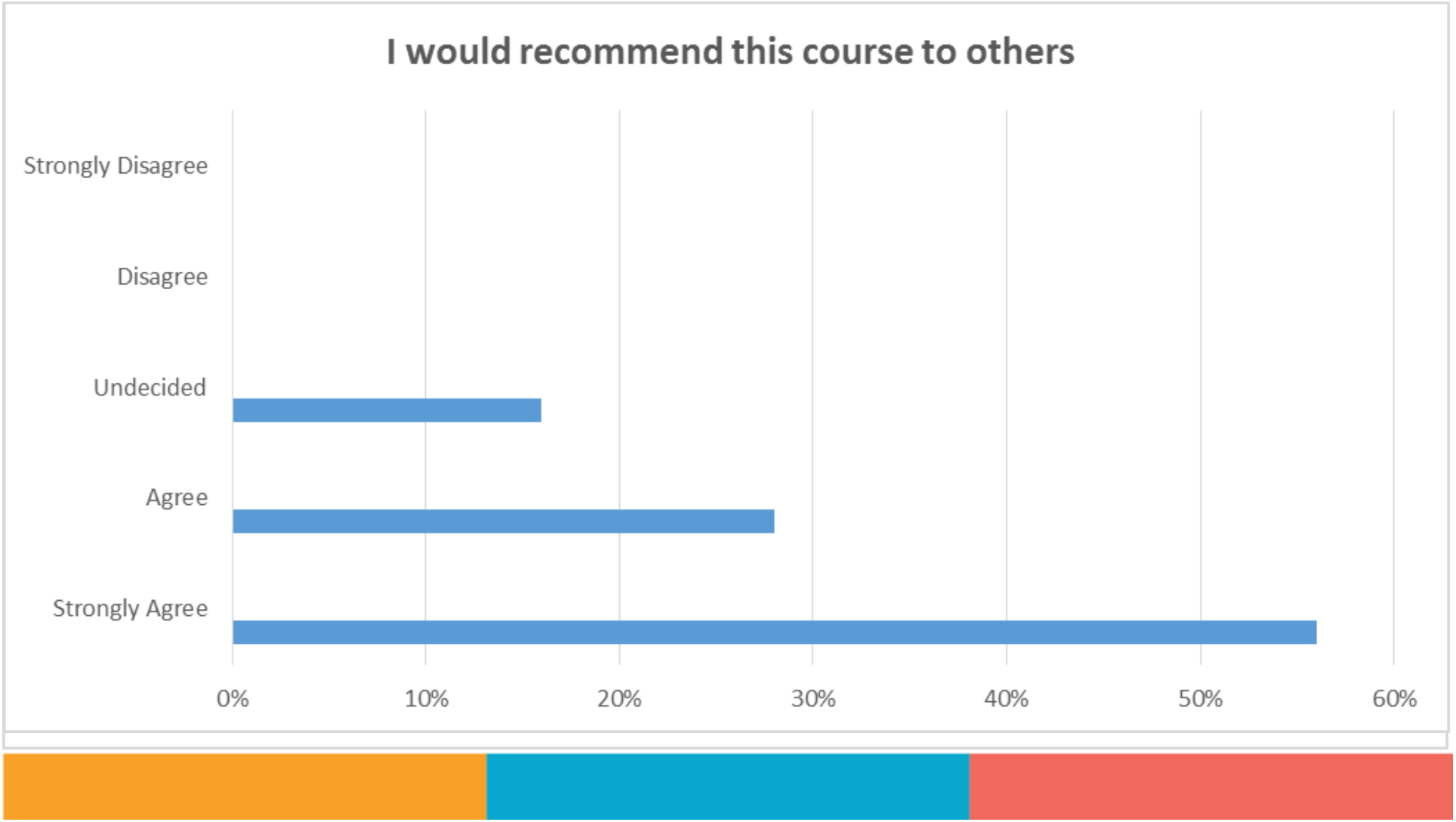
In this video Anne emphasises that while engaging in higher education as a flexible learner can be challenging it is manageable (with planning!). Th
should think about why you want to do the course to make sure that your motivations outweigh your anxieties.

Here is a video (2 min 27 sec) featuring another graduate from a flexible learning programme. Dr Margaret Ryan gained her undergraduate and po
time, adult learner and has years of experience as a tutor for online learners.

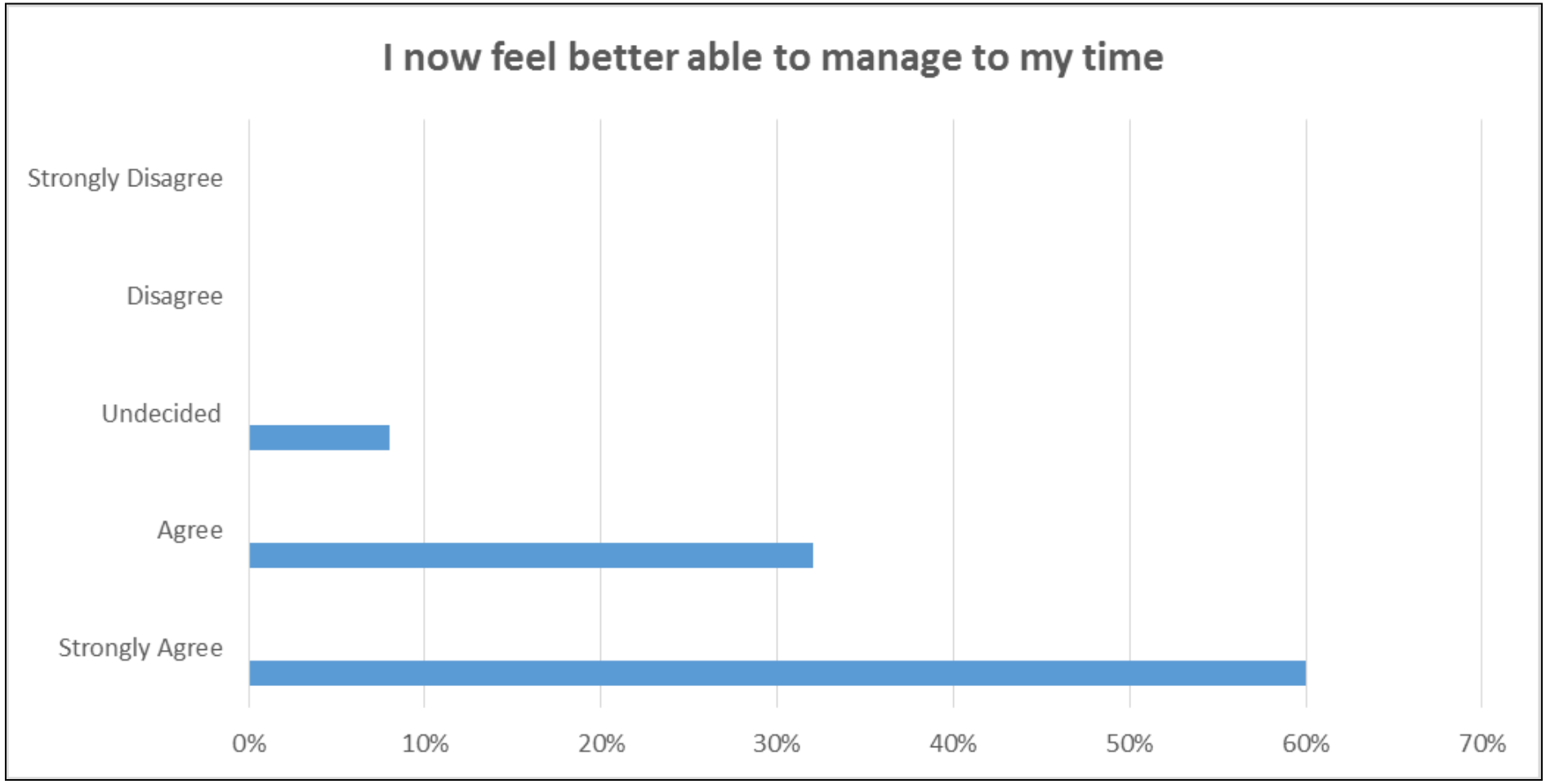
Early Indications from Pilot



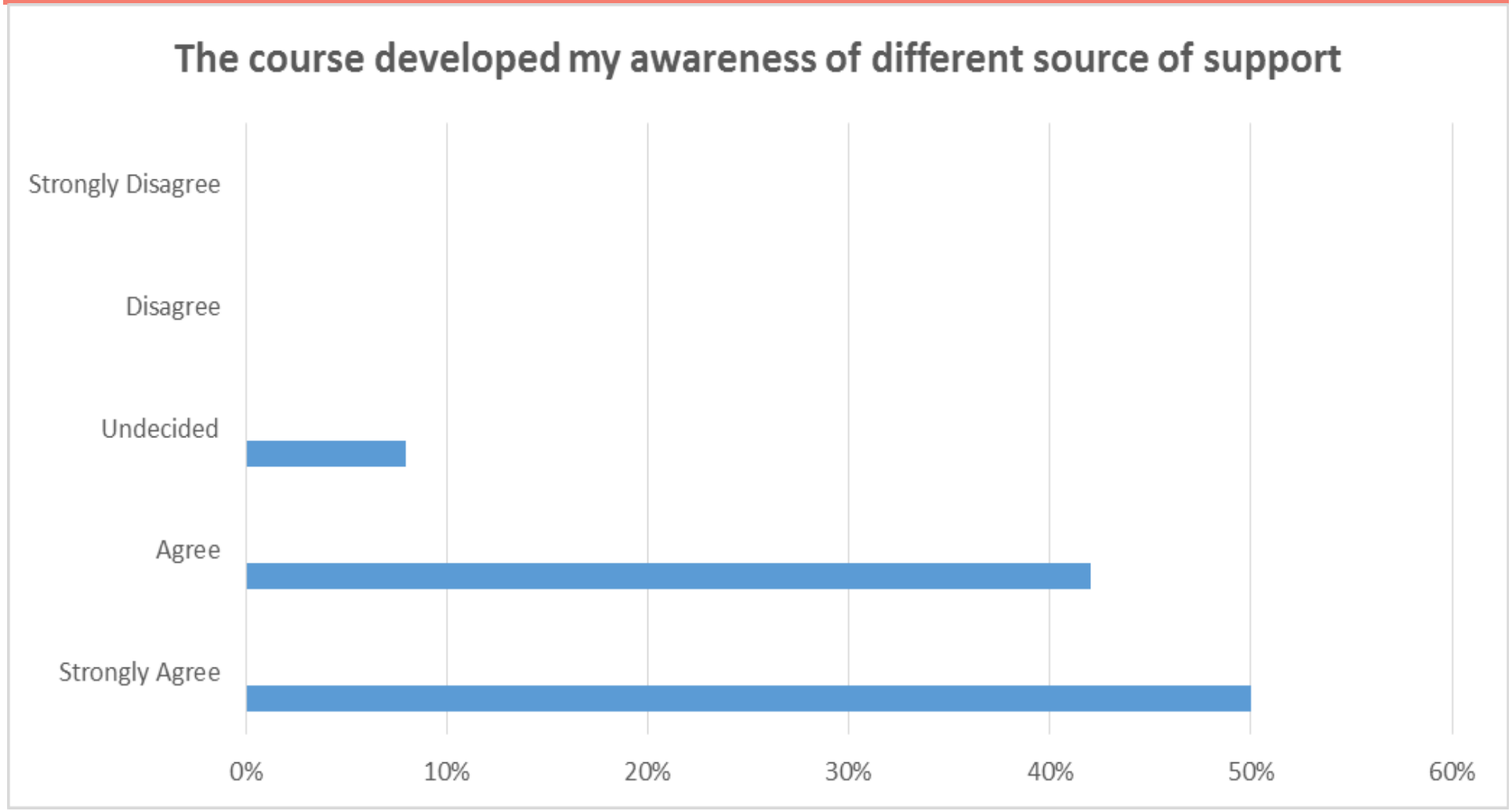
Early Indications from Pilot



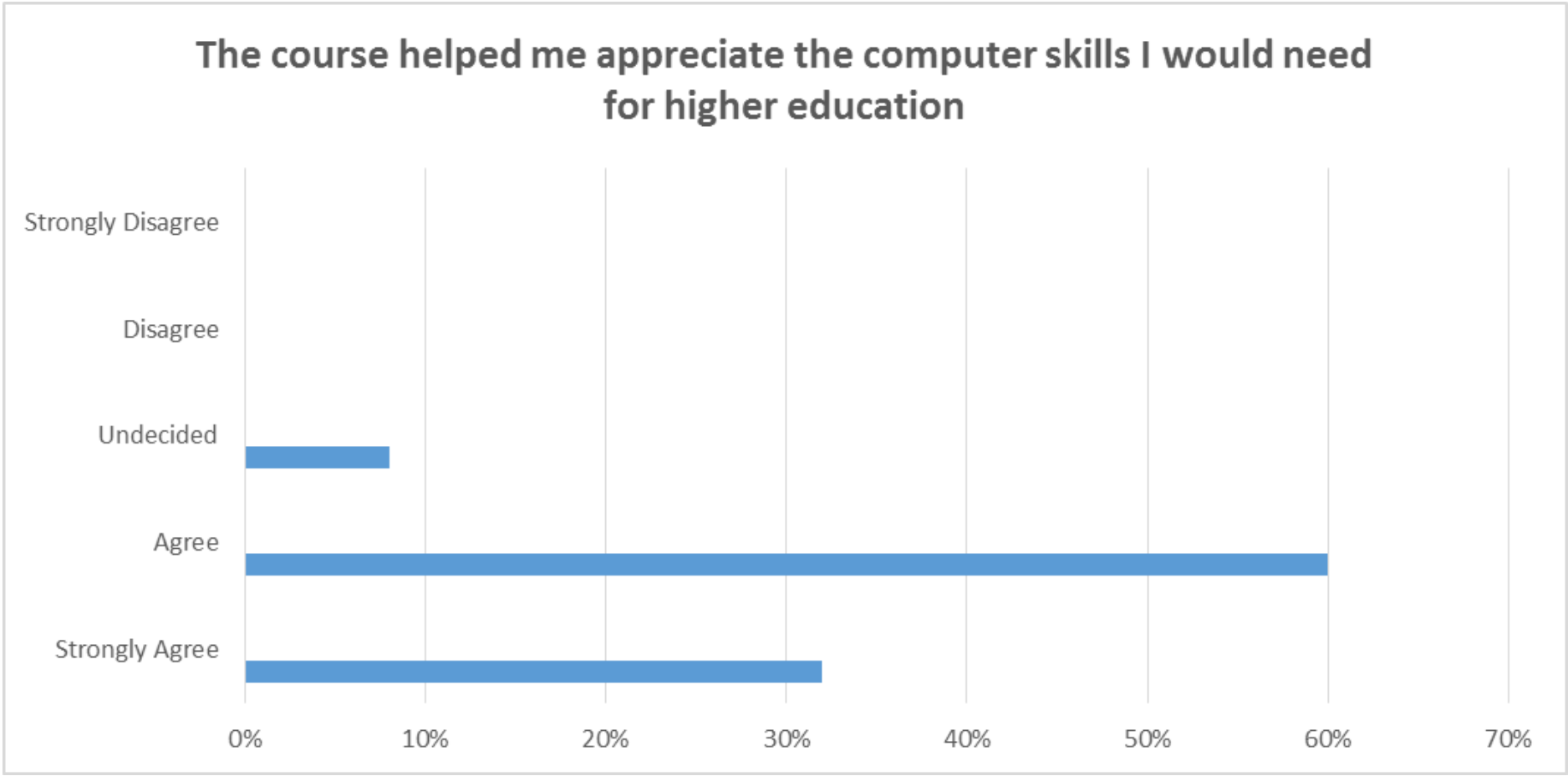
Effectiveness of the Tools



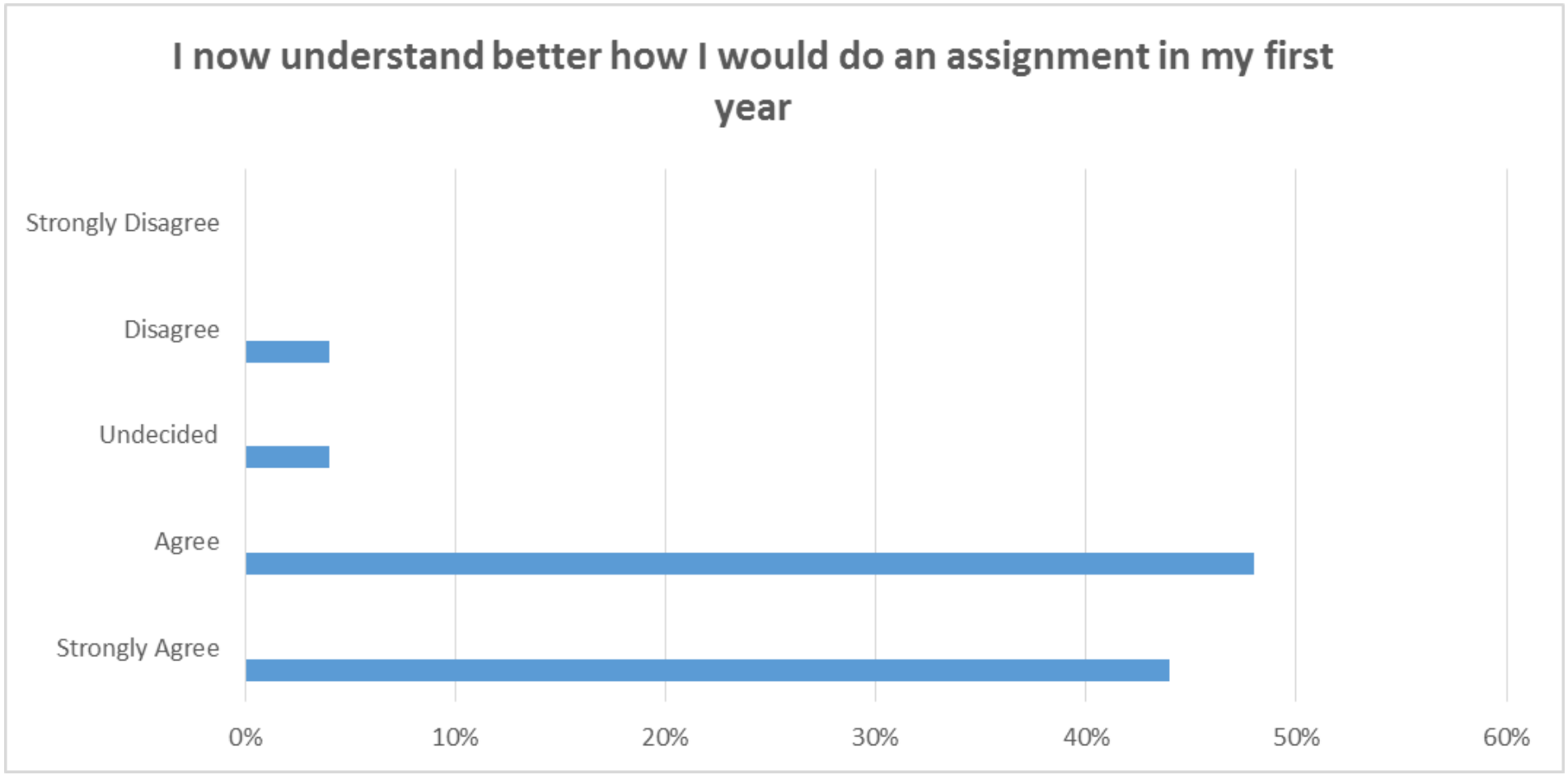
Effectiveness of the Tools



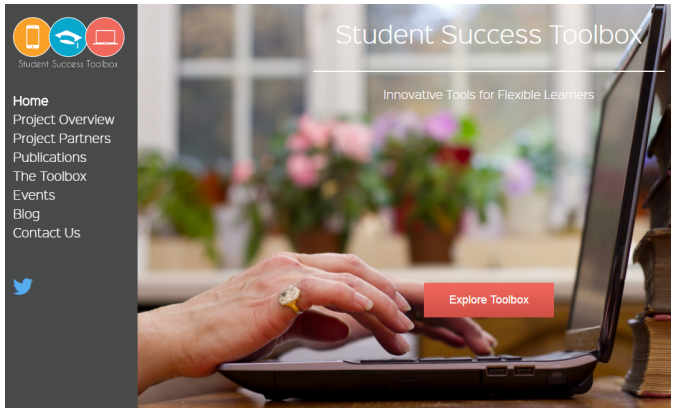
Effectiveness of the Tools



Effectiveness of the Tools



Sustainability



Personal Open source Business Explore Pricing Blog Support This repository Search Sign in Sign up

studentsuccesstoolbox / **StudentSuccessToolbox**

Watch 3 Star 2 Fork 1

Code Issues 0 Pull requests 0 Projects 0 Pulse Graphs

A collection of tools to support transitions from thinking about study to the first weeks to increase retention and completion rates particularly for flexible learners (undergraduate adult, part-time and online/distance students) as this is a significant problem in the Irish Higher Education sector.

Thank You!

Student Success Toolbox Project Team

Dr James Brunton (DCU), Prof Mark Brown (DCU), Ann Cleary (DKIT), Dr Eamon Costello (DCU), Lorraine Delaney (DCU), Seamus Fox (DCU), Jennifer Gilligan (IT Sligo), Brian Mulligan (IT Sligo), Lisa O'Regan (MU), Jamie Ward (DKIT)

T&L DCU NIDL Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth DUNDALK INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IT Sligo An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach

NIDL
National Institute
for Digital Learning

Professor Mark Brown

Director, National Institute for Digital Learning

mark.brown@dcu.ie

www.dcu.ie/nidl

@mbrownz

www.slideshare.net/mbrownz

DCU