# Call for papers – Special issue
## *Enculturation and development of beginning students*

## Outline

In many respects, the first semesters of studying are decisive for students' further academic development (GALE & PARKER, 2012). Not only the experiences of professionals providing guidance and counselling for incoming students, but also a considerable body of research approaching the topic from various angles emphasize the importance of students' first encounter with Higher Education.

Especially in the US, the first year of studying has been investigated through a socio-cultural lens, researching how students adapt and integrate into Higher Education as their new habitat. Most prominently, research into retention and attrition has highlighted the pivotal role of students' ability to integrate into the socio-cultural environment of their Higher Education institution at the beginning of their studies. It has been shown that students who do not succeed in building an identity and social ties related to their study environment have a higher risk of dropping out than students who successfully master this process of enculturation (TINTO, 1998). In a similar vein, college effectiveness research provides evidence that the way Higher Education Institutions receive their incoming students, communicate their institutional mission, and explicate their expectations concerning performance and learning effort, has a significant impact on student engagement, i.e. the time and energy students dedicate to their studies (KEZAR & KINZIE, 2006; KRAUSE & COATES, 2008; KUH, KINZIE, SCHUH, & WHITT, 2005). Furthermore, integrating students into social learning communities from the beginning of their studies is another important factor impacting on engagement (ROCCONI, 2011; ZHAO & KUH, 2004). Student engagement, in turn, plays an important role for academic success (PASCARELLA, SEIFERT & BLAICH, 2010).

Other studies have approached the topic of beginning students in Higher Education by looking at students' individual developments, studying variables such as motivation, emotions, attitudes and learning strategies. Concerning motivation several studies indicate that students loose motivation throughout the first year (BRAHM & GEBHARDT, 2011; BUSSE, 2013; JACOBS & NEWSTEAD, 2000; LAU, LIEM & NIE, 2008; LIEBERMAN & REMEDIOS, 2007; MARTIN, COLMAR, DAVEY & MARSH, 2010) and that their interests narrow down from a broad range of subject areas to just a few (BUSATO, PRINS, ELSHOUTA & HAMAKER, 2000). In a longitudinal study, Brahm et al. found negative developments in students' motivations as well as their attitudes towards studying (BRAHM & JENERT, 2013, 2014; BRAHM, JENERT & EULER, 2013). However, advanced analysis within the sample showed those developments to be quite different for distinctive student subgroups (JENERT & BRAHM, 2013). Mikkonen and colleagues (2013) qualitatively investigated the developments of first- and second-year students' interests and goal orientations, identifying different constellations supporting or hindering commitment to their studies. Research focusing on university students' emotions has shown that emotions play an important role in their studying (PEKRUN et al., 2002; TRIGWELL et al., 2011). A study by Hailikari, Kordts-Freudinger and Postareff (2014) focusing of first year students showed that they experienced a range of emotions during their first study year. Students often described positive emotions such as satisfaction and enthusiasm, but worryingly, negative emotions were

described more often. Among the emotions described most frequently were dissatisfaction, confusion and anxiety. The results also showed that emotions were related to study success and progress: The lesser students experienced negative emotions, the better their study success and the faster their academic progress during the first year (HAILIKARI, KORDTS-FREUDINGER & POSTAREFF, 2014).

Concerning the development of constructs that are immediately related to learning and studying, such as learning strategies and approaches to learning, there is no clear evidence as to whether students develop and if they do, in which direction (EDMUNDS & RICHARDSON, 2009; STRUYVEN, DOCHY, JANSSENS & GIELEN, 2006). Some studies suggest that approaches to learning are relatively stable across time and contexts (e.g. LIETZ & MATTHEWS, 2010; ZEEGERS, 2001) but a recent study found that students' deep approach to learning increased from their first study year to the third study year (ASIKAINEN et al., 2014). From a more individual perspective, it has been shown that some first and second-year students show greater variability in their approaches to learning across different courses while others show less (LINDBLOM-YLÄNNE, PARPALA & POSTAREFF, 2013).

Building on the above-mentioned insights from previous research, the aim of this issue of the Zeitschrift für Hochschulentwicklung is …

(1) to expand scientific knowledge on students' developments as well as their enculturation / adaption to the Higher Education environment.
(2) to reflect on concepts supporting student enculturation and fostering positive developments / personal growth during the first year.

Decidedly, the issue focuses on students' developments *after* they have entered their studies, excluding issues such as selection processes or preparation during secondary education. The following questions may provide guidelines for authors to focus their contributions:

- How do students develop throughout the initial phase (first year, undergraduate years) of their studies concerning e.g. motivation, emotions, attitudes, learning strategies / approaches to learning?
- What are important/crucial variables according to which subgroups of beginning students can be distinguished / investigated?
- How do subgroups within student cohorts differ with regard to study-related variables?
- What kind of challenges do students encounter during their enculturation / adaptation to the Higher Education environment?
- What provides guidance and orientation for students during their enculturation / adaptation to the Higher Education environment?
- How do specific student subgroups differ in their enculturation / adaptation to the Higher Education environment?
- How can subgroups of beginning students with their respective needs be diagnosed in order to provide adequate support?
- How can support for beginning students be implemented in order to both address individual needs and match the curriculum?
- Which factors are crucial for beginning students' study success and academic progress?
- How does the teaching-learning environment enhance or impede beginning students' studying?

With regard to scientific / research-oriented contributions, we encourage both qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixed-method studies as well as design-oriented studies. We especially encourage innovative research designs that are suited to address the challenging topics of (a) enculturation i.e. social interactional and identity-related processes and (b) capturing the longitudinal development of student cohorts while at the same time recognizing individual differences and peculiarities. Conceptual contributions should preferably address the development of students over time (e.g. describing longer-term counselling or mentoring) and provide clear references to underlying theoretical considerations.

We are looking forward to your scientific or conceptual contribution referring to one of the above guiding questions.

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# Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

## Information for submission

English contributions may be submitted in two possible forms:

**Scientific contributions**: Scientific contributions should comply with the following criteria. The contribution:

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analysis, reflections on the research contexts;
- focuses on essential aspects;
- is theoretically underpinned (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value;
- clarifies the methodology of the acquisition of knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA);
- comprises up to 33.600 characters in sum (with spaces).

**Workshop reports** refer to the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practices and good processes, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should:

- demonstrate potential for knowledge transfer;
- describe illustrative aspects and factors in accordance with the intersubjective exchange and the theory formation;
- be systematic and transparent presentation;
- follow the relevant citation rules consistently (APA);
- comprise up to 21.600 characters in sum (with spaces).

**Schedule**

**5 July 2015 – Submission deadline for complete contributions:**
Please upload your contribution in the ZFHE journal system (http://www.zfhe.at) in the respective category (i.e. scientific contribution or workshop report) of the 10/4 issue in anonymized format. To do so, you must register as an "author" in the ZFHE system.

**15 September 2015 – Feedback/Reviews:** Scientific contributions and workshop reports are evaluated in accordance with the double blind process (see above).

**15 October 2015 – Revision deadline:** Where necessary, contributions can be altered in accordance with recommendations from the feedback.

**30 November 2015 – Online publication** of the issue at http://www.zfhe.at.

### Review Process

Each contribution to be published in ZFHE (solicited or submitted) will be subjected to a double-blind review by two competent reviewers. The publishers of the current edition (if need be with the help of the editorial team and the editorial board) will decide on further procedures – with the following options:

- publication (for two specific reasons)
- invitation to revision
- obtaining a third opinion
- delegating the decision to the editorial board
- definitive rejection

### Formatting and Submission

In order to save valuable time with the formatting of the contributions, we kindly ask all authors to work from the outset with the template that can be downloaded on the ZFHE homepage:

http://www.zfhe.at/userupload/ZFHE_10-4_TEMPLATE.docx

We must be able to edit the texts (i.e. Word or OpenDocument files). Please do not upload any PDF files!

Finished contributions of the "scientific contribution" and "workshop report" categories are first required in anonymized form, in order to guarantee the double-blind review process. Please remove all references and clues that may reveal the author of the document (also in the document properties). This information can be added if the submission is accepted.

### Questions?

If you have any questions related to the topic of the issue please contact Tobias Jenert (tobias.jenert@unisg.ch) or Taiga Brahm (taiga.brahm@unisg.ch). For technical and organizational questions please contact Michael Raunig (office@zfhe.at).

### We look forward to your submissions!

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