



Co-Designing for Belonging: A Digitally Enabled Intervention to Support First Generation Students

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Abstract

First generation students often navigate higher education without the inherited knowledge, cultural capital, or sense of belonging that many peers possess. The poster reports on a co-designed intervention created in collaboration with first generation students, framed through an approach in which learning is digitally enabled and teaching fosters social interaction and collaboration.

The project brought staff and students together as partners to identify impediments, prototype technology solutions, and evaluate iterative designs. Through a series of focus groups and in-person co-design workshops, first generation students designed and implemented an intervention in collaboration with teaching staff that was aimed at improving their knowledge of university processes, academic skills and sense of belonging. Digital platforms provided accessible, flexible routes for participation that complimented face-to-face teaching sessions and enabled shared problem-solving and community-building.

The findings demonstrate that co-design not only amplifies first generation student voice but also strengthens belonging by positioning students as contributors to institutional change. The poster highlights how intentionally blending digital enablement with collaborative teaching practices can create a dynamic learning community that supports first generation students more effectively.

Keywords

Co-design, belonging, empowering, community of practice

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