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Workshop: Towards a National First-Year Experience Framework for South African Higher Education Institutions

**Siyaphumelela Conference 2024
26 June 2024, 11h00-13h00, Venue-Gala B**

Prof Ruth Hoskins (UKZN), Prof Subethra Pather (UWC), Dr Sharmla Rama (UKZN), Miss Fezile Wagner (WITS), Dr Zena Richards (WITS), Dr Mzwandile Khumalo (DUT), Dr Nosisana Mkonto (CPUT), Mrs Lauren Oosthuizen (UFS), Mrs Jani Kuhn (NWU) and Dr Ephraim Mhlanga (Saide)

Structure of the Workshop



1. **Welcome (30 minutes) – Ruth Hoskins**
 - a) The aim of the workshop (1 minute)
 - b) The FYE Workstream team (4 minutes)
 - c) The Draft National FYE Framework (25 minutes)
2. **Group Activity & Discussion (64 minutes) – Sue Pather**
 - a) Discussion sheet for each table and the final question to address in the 5-minute feedback (20 minutes)
 - b) Gallery Walk (6 minutes at each poster – 24 minutes)
 - c) Five-minute Report Back (20 minutes) – **The Group’s nominated person**
3. **Summation/ Harvesting (20 minutes) – Jani Kuhn**
4. **Closing Remarks & Next Steps (6 minutes) - Ruth Hoskins**
 - a) Evaluation survey link & QR code

Welcome



Aim of the Workshop

To introduce the proposed National FYE Framework to stakeholders

To solicit stakeholder input and feedback on the Framework relating to the Building a Sense of Belonging and Inclusion (*Transitioning students to the university and through their first-year*) component

To examine what data-driven evidence can be used across the Student Journey component

To revise the National FYE Framework with the input and feedback received

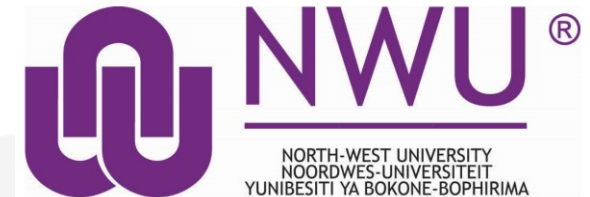
The Siyaphumelela FYE Workstream Team



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Draft National FYE Framework

What are we trying to achieve through the National FYE Framework?

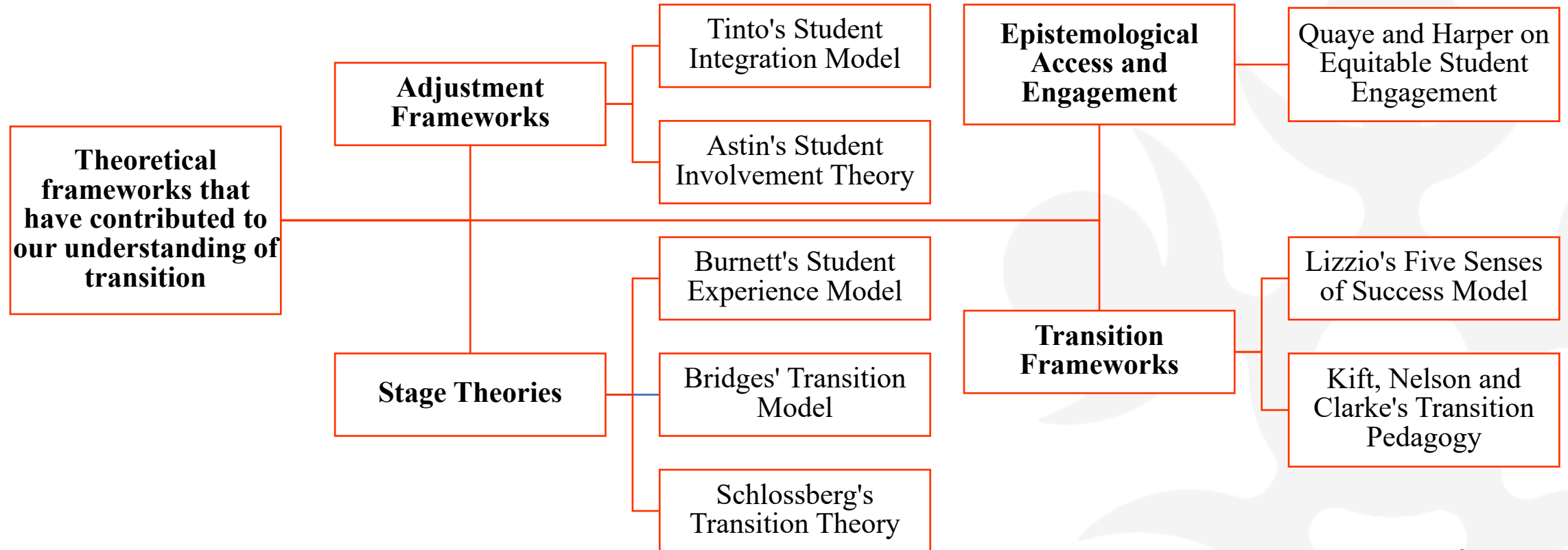
To encourage a deliberate, structured, systematic, coordinated and evidence-based national institutional approach to the first-year experience programmes and initiatives that:

- a) builds a sense of belonging and inclusion,
- b) creates an enabling institutional first-year environment, and
- c) promotes academic and psycho-social supportive engagements and environment.



Theoretical & Conceptual Frameworks

The figure below reflects some key theoretical and conceptual frameworks relating to the FYE that have informed this national framework.



Source: Oosthuizen, 2024

Guiding Principles

Higher Education Institutions must work to develop first-year experience programmes and initiatives that are:



Aligned and consistent with their overall institutional vision, mission and core values

Ensuring first-year experience learning outcomes develops students' skills, competencies and knowledge

Building intentional institutional, student and staff relationships with shared responsibility

Building meaningful student experience as students transition from high school to university

Clearly connected to student success, retention and throughput

Encouraging humanising/Ubuntu, social justice and ethical approaches and practices in all matters relating to the first-year experience and student success

Promoting student voice through feedback, evaluation and student engagement

Underpinned by evidence-based practices

NATIONAL FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK (NFYEF)

Building a Sense of Belonging and Inclusion

OUTCOME



Recruiting & Shaping, Open Days, School Liaison & Outreach

Onboarding

Registration

FYE Initiatives

DATA

- Feeder School Lists

- Student Profile
- University Expectations Survey

- Enrolment Plan
- Staff & student evaluations
- Before University Student Survey (BUSSE)

- Student Evaluations
- Staff Evaluations
- Programme Evaluations
- Student Participation data - registers or attendance lists
- Monitoring student performance

The Student Journey:
Transitioning students to the university and through their first-year.

Creating an enabling Institutional First-Year Environment

FYE Curriculum

Tracking & Monitoring of FYE Programmes

Review & Evaluation of FYE Programme

Infrastructure

- Synergy between Curricular and Co-Curricular
- Assessment
- Flexible Learning
- Student Centred

- Student Tracking of Participation
- Cohort Studies
- Data Analytics

- Baseline/ Demographic Profile
- FYE Programme Review
- FYE Curriculum Review
- Academic Rules & Policies – integration of the mandatory FYE Policy

- Mainstreaming of FYE Programmes
- Physical Space
- Information & Communications Technologies
- Administrative systems & staff
- Funding
- Resources
- Data & Connectivity

Institution:
Mainstreaming of the FYE initiatives/ programme and the use of data analytics to inform practice

Academic and Psycho-Social Supportive Engagement and Environment

Financial

Well-being

Academic

- Student Fees
- Food security
- Living conditions (accommodation/ residences)
- Commuting
- Access to healthcare

- Mental & physical health well-being
- Personal growth
- Counselling services
- Career planning
- Safety & Security (GBV)
- Disability Support
- Mentoring

- Tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction
- Academic Advising

Partnerships:
Integrated FYE programme and student support services.

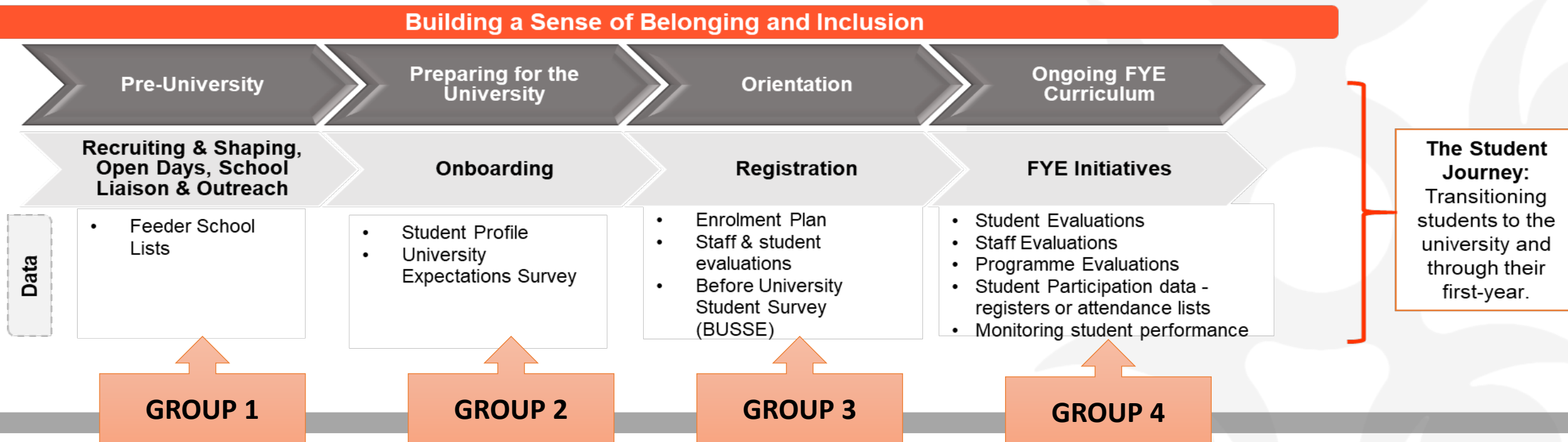
Student Voice through feedback, evaluation, and engagement

Group Activity & Discussion

Group Discussions



- Four groups: 20 minutes of discussion
 - On your tables: Discussion questions page relating to one of the stages in the first component, flip chart paper & Koki/pens



Questions for the Discussion

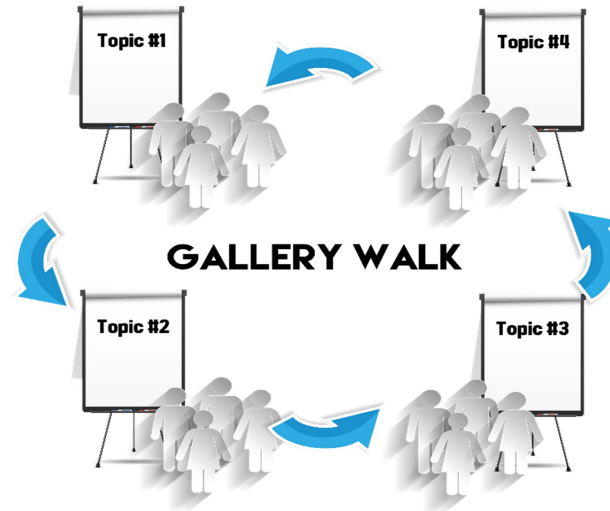
Pre-University	Preparing for the University	Orientation	Ongoing FYE Curriculum
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does your institution have a pre-university programme (Yes/No) 2) If Yes, list the pre-university initiatives or activities (e.g. School liaison, Community engagement, etc.) 3) What data tools are used at your institution to profile students at the pre-university stage? (feeder school data, admissions data, matric download from previous years, etc.) 4) How is the data from the tools used to improve the pre-university stage? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does your institution run an onboarding programme for students who are admitted to your institution? (Yes/No) 2) If Yes, then list the onboarding initiatives or activities (e.g. Welcome events) 3) What data tools are used at your institution to profile students at the onboarding or preparing for the university stage (e.g. student expectation surveys)? 4) How is the data from the tools used to improve the onboarding or preparing for the university stage? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does your institution have an orientation programme (Yes/No) 2) If Yes, list the orientation initiatives or activities (e.g. workshops, seminars, etc.) 3) What data tools are used at your institution to profile students at the orientation stage? (enrolment plan, staff and student evaluations, BUSSE, etc.) 4) How is the data from the tools used to improve the orientation stage? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does your institution have an ongoing FYE programme or initiatives (Yes/No) 2) If Yes, list the ongoing programme or initiatives (e.g. workshops, seminars, etc.) 3) What data tools are used at your institution to profile students at the ongoing FYE programme or initiatives stage? (Programme evaluations, Student evaluations, Staff evaluations, Student participation data [registers or attendance lists], monitoring student performance, etc.) 4) How is the data from the tools used to improve the ongoing FYE programme or initiatives stage?

Group Activity

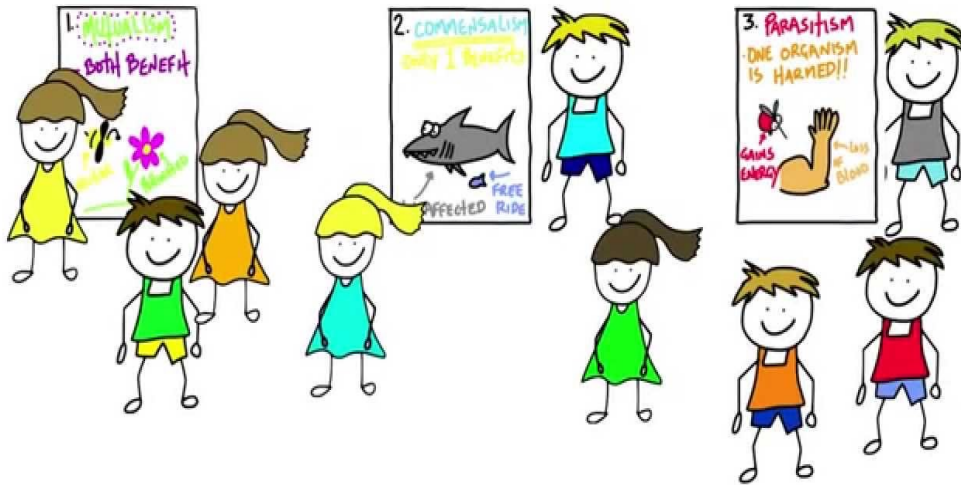
- Have a discussion and write down your thoughts on the flip chart
- Your poster will be placed up on the wall.
- Nominate one person to stand at the poster to welcome guests and provide the information needed during the Gallery Walk.



Gallery Walk



- A team member from each group will be at their poster.
- Each group will spend time on a poster.
- Please write comments on sticky notes for the groups on their poster.
- Then move to the next poster.
- *Spend 5 minutes on each poster (20 minutes total).*



Back at your table

- Spend 4-minutes looking at the sticky notes and discuss the comments from the other participants' visit to your poster as a team.
- Choose one person who will provide a 5-minute report on the stage you had and important points you identified relating to this component.
- **Total 24 minutes.**

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Summation/ Harvesting

Pre-University Comments



- Most common trend is concentrating on STEM students in feeder schools
- Another example - Feeder programme that starts at Grade 9 and grow into the institution
- Who should lead this – Student recruitment office (they can collaborate with other departments to avoid duplication and fragmented efforts)
- Data collection – Biographical questionnaires when students apply helps to give information on resources
- Tailoring interventions to the students

Preparing for University: Onboarding Comments



- Pre-registration orientation & pre-university connect
- Online surveys & courses before students register (before students accept the offer to get information on prospective students)
- How can rural students be equipped because of resource constraints?
- More collaboration between departments i.e. recruitment, admissions, financial aids.
- The issue of phasing out walk-in students?
- Biographical questionnaires and institutional data is used in this phase
- Train students on the LMS (pre orientation) this is open for all “unconditionally accepted” students

Orientation Comments



- Deans discussions/introductions and workshops
- Welcoming day
- Orientation week (on campus and hybrid) – academic focus, technology focus to play on LMS, Support focus, Exhibitions and sign-ups, peer mentors facilitate orientation, library tours.
- Student leaders and peer mentors are used during orientation to show students the campus.
- Networking opportunities
- Recorded sessions
- Exhibitions
- Faculty/school based orientations
- BUSSE, HEMIS, Registration data, Biographical data
- Track and monitor orientation attendance to see where it can be improved
- Assessing the digital readiness of students to direct to relevant support services
- How do you ensure all students retain all the information given in orientation – students are often scared/shy to ask – this is where centralised programmes are beneficial (i.e. mentoring, business enterprise development)

Ongoing FYE Curriculum Comments



- Extending the FYE throughout the year is done in various ways (i.e. online programmes, tutoring etc.)
- Connecting to the 2nd year experience – peer mentoring initiatives
- Uploaded on an online platform to be accessed later on
- Peer mentors are assigned to FTENS
- Students are flagged to get assistance
- A time in the time table should be allocated to the FYE
- Incentivise certain FYE initiatives
- Make the student leaders a partner in your FYE initiative/programmes.
- Academic advisers should attend classes to enable them to talk to students.

Closing Remarks & Next Steps



EVALUATION FORM:
SIYAPHUMELELA FIRST-YEAR
EXPERIENCE WORKSTREAM



<https://forms.office.com/r/WbyYSZ7915>



**Thank
you**