

Helping first year engineering students Get Set for success in their studies

Lorelle J. Burton

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia
Lorelle.Burton@usq.edu.au

Majella Albion

University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Australia
Majella.Albion@usq.edu.au

Martin Shepherd

University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand
ma.shepherd@auckland.ac.nz

William McBride

University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia
William.McBride@newcastle.edu.au

Lydia Kavanagh

University of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia
l.kavanagh@uq.edu.au

The increasing diversity of the student population in higher education gives rise to issues relating to the ability to engage all students in productive and fulfilling learning experiences. With diversity comes an acknowledgement of the variety of learning spaces occupied by incoming students, and the need to ensure that those spaces become places of learning. The strategy proposed in this study to transform space into place is an online pre-test of first year engineering students, the Get Set quiz. This quiz enables commencing engineering students to self-test their readiness to study their chosen courses by measuring and providing individualised feedback on a number of cognitive and non-cognitive factors shown to be significant predictors of academic success. The best time for such self-assessment is prior to the commencement of their studies. Get Set helps set the scene for establishing *place*, by giving students the confidence that they have made an informed career choice, and/or by linking them with appropriate support mechanisms if necessary. Students are directed to support both on campus and online to help develop an individual study plan to address any knowledge and skills gaps. This proactive approach to independent learning improves students' self-awareness and helps them self-reflect on their approaches to learning, better preparing them for their studies.