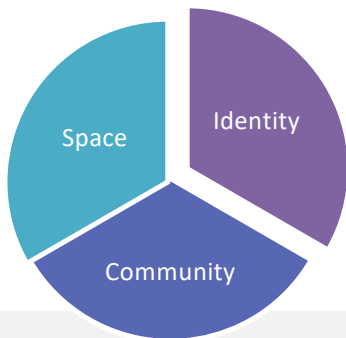# Identity: Before

Student attitudes and beliefs about themselves and how they feel about starting the course

Identity: Before

- Are there opportunities for students to learn from previous students on the course?

- How does institutional guidance reflect the needs of the distance learner? If not, what can you do about it?

- How are learners introduced to what might be expected of them as an online learner? What skills and qualities they may need to develop?

- How have any sense of belonging activities incorporated the needs of students with seen and unseen disabilities, including non-neurotypical learners?

- How are students encouraged to personalise their own user profiles on the VLE?

- How do students know or have access to the study calendar?

- How do you encourage students to share their hopes and fears?

- Any other questions? Examples from own practice?

Space: Before
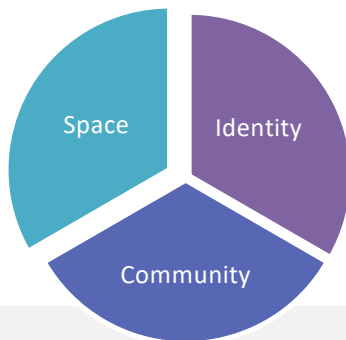
The online space where most help, course materials and interaction takes place

Space: Before

- What kinds of induction activities have you designed specifically for your distance learners? Is there an online space where new learners can meet each other and staff?

- How have you ensured that sense of belonging has been built into course design?

- If you use face-to-face sessions, how are they integrated with online sessions to promote sense of belonging?

- Do learners have all the software they need to access the online space and can they use it?

- Do learners know where to go to find help and do they use it?

- How have you ensured that feedback from previous cohorts has been used to improve the module and are the new students aware of this?

- Any other questions? Examples from own practice?

QAA Scotland | The Open University | University of Dundee
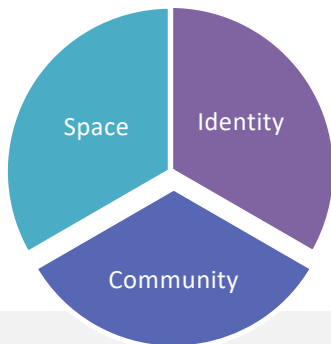
Community: Before

The community the student is joining, includes: other students, tutors, module teams, support staff, library staff and so on includes community building

Community: Before

How do you encourage new learners and staff (including yourself) to contribute to introductory discussions?

Do learners know where to go to find help and how effective is that help?

How do you ensure that the emerging online community is safe and supportive?

How do you communicate to students the optimum ways in which to use community spaces?

How can you foster personal engagement with the module team while dealing with large amounts of learners at a distance?

What is the optimum size of 'community building' for your purposes? Are there different community sizes that are appropriate for different purposes?

Examples from your own practice/experience?

Identity: During
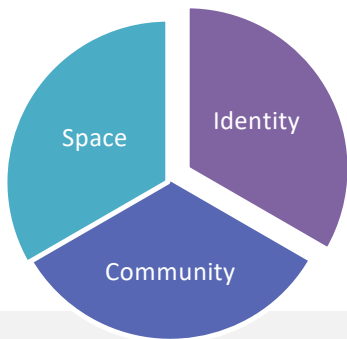
Student attitudes and beliefs about themselves and how they are encouraged to develop

Identity: During

- How can you support non-participating students so that they do not feel harassed?

- How can you communicate to students that there is no wrong way to connect with the online community but keep them connected to you/the course?

- Do you actively work to make students feel that their contributions are valued? How do you do that?

- How do you support students in collaborative activity? How do you model belonging and respect for students to demonstrate to other another?

- What techniques have you used to help you encourage students to participate in synchronous teaching sessions in ways they are comfortable with?

- Any other questions? Examples from own practice?

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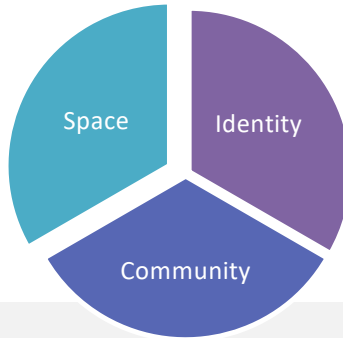
Space: During

Continued management and use of the online space including various tools such as forums, synchronised sessions and other software

Sense of Belonging Toolkit for Online and Distance Learners

Space: During

- What functionality does your VLE system have that supports sense of belonging?

- How do you prepare tutors for use of the online space?

- What are the purpose of synchronous group sessions within the course? What pedagogical purpose do they meet? Are they primarily for information exchange and/or community building? How does that impact on how they are used/relate to the course content

- What challenges have you encountered using synchronous sessions and how have you over come them

- Any other questions? Examples from own practice?

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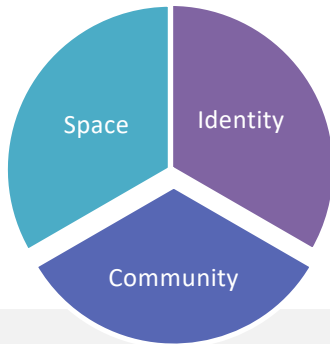
Community: During

The community the student is a member of, includes how community is built, maintained and developed.

Community: During

- How do you foster a presence on discussion boards?

- How do you facilitate online peer discussion without taking over the community?

- How do you ensure that the online community continues to be safe and supportive?

- How can you continue to foster personal engagement with the module team while dealing with large amounts of learners at a distance?

- How do you keep yourself engaged with the students?

- How do you ensure that you are present for students and can respond to their needs?

- How do you manage online collaborative activities?

- Examples from your own practice/experience?

Community: Closing

Space

Identity
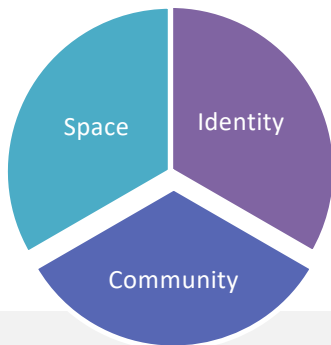
Community

How the closure of the learning community is managed.

Community: Closing

- How do you foster a sense of closure for the community?

- How do you use the community to help students transition onto their next course/learning experience?

- How do you help students say goodbye to the community?

- How do you keep yourself engaged with the students?

- How do you ensure that you are present for students and can respond to their needs?

- How do you manage online collaborative activities?

- Examples from your own practice/experience?

Space: Closing
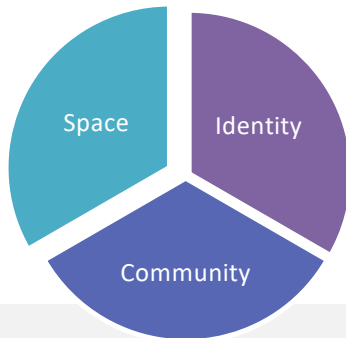
How the learning space is used to facilitate
the course end and collect student evaluations

Space: Closing

- How long will the course website remain open to students?

- How long will forums and other discussion spaces remain open to students?

- What instruments will you use to collect student evaluations?

- How do you ensure that lessons have been learnt about the use of online space to create sense of belonging for future cohorts?

- Examples from your own practice/experience?

Identity: Closing
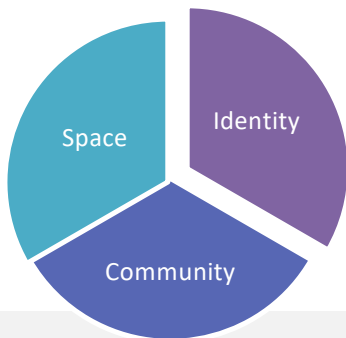
What students have learnt about themselves and their beliefs and how they can take these with them to their next course

Identity: Closing

- How are students encouraged to reflect on their experiences on the course?

- How can you help students capture what have they learnt and achieved? About their subject? And about themselves?

- How can you help students value what they have achieved?

- What strategies might you use to help students consider their next steps?

- How do you ensure that that student views about the course will be valued and carried forward? How will the students know that?

- Examples from your own practice/experience?

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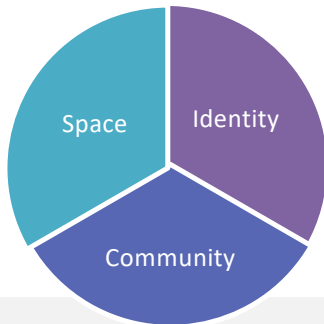
Assessment

How assessment should be designed to support snd foster Sense of Belonging

Assessment

- Is there a separate space or facility for students to communicate about assessment?

- How is formative assessment used on the course to help increase student confidence? Why does this work?

- If peer assessment and feedback is used, how can you ensure that this is a positive and supportive experience? How does the use of the online learning space facilitate this?

- Do students know how to submit assessments in an online context? How clear are instructions? How can we minimise anxiety and stress if something goes wrong?

- How is reflection on student learning built into assessment?

- Examples from your own practice/experience?