



Department
for Education

Higher Education Mental Health Implementation Taskforce

Wellbeing Analytics

This strand forms part of the 'Identification of Risk' work and is outlined in the Taskforce First Stage Report. The view of the Taskforce is that analytics are providing HEPs with early intelligence on students, which can be used to deliver effective preventative and targeted interventions. The Taskforce has agreed to consider what actions it might take or support to encourage the adoption of analytics by HEPs.

Challenges

In discussions with the sector, we have heard that whilst HEPs recognise the value of analytics, there is a lack of institutional data readiness to implement these systems. The adoption of analytics also requires a more profound rethink of student support, including the need for a greater understanding of the best ways of delivering analytics-prompted interventions¹.

These are challenging tasks that require investment in resources at a time of growing constraints. In addition, there is a view that there has been insufficient championing of analytics across the sector. The combination of these factors may be diluting the positive case for wellbeing analytics.

Recent Developments

Core Specification for Student Analytics (2023)

In March 2023, Edward Peck – the HE Student Support Champion – collaborated with Jisc to produce the [Core Specification for Engagement and Wellbeing Analytics](#). The guide outlines the 11 core datapoints that experience and evidence suggest could be deployed to deliver meaningful insight on students' engagement and wellbeing. The majority of these datapoints are likely being collected by HEPs already, although the quality and availability of these data will vary between HEPs. The guide also addresses data governance, ethics, legality, and the changing needs of HEPs' workforce due to the implementation of analytics.

Data Maturity Framework (2024)

In March 2024, Jisc published its [Data Maturity Framework](#). The Framework aims to support and guide HEPs to improve their data governance such that they are more able to leverage data to improve and enhance their processes, reporting and decision-making. These are necessary prerequisites to implement analytics systems.

TASO Student Wellbeing Analytics Project (2024)

In March 2024, [TASO were awarded funding](#) by the Evaluation Accelerator Fund (EAF) to investigate the impact of analytics-prompted interventions to support student wellbeing. The project will run from May 2024 to March 2025.

Evaluation of the Northumbria Analytics Project (2024)

Jisc will soon publish its evaluation of the innovative Northumbria Wellbeing Analytics project. We expect this evaluation to demonstrate that it is possible to predict student wellbeing with accuracy, as well as to identify additional students who may otherwise have remained unknown to HEPs' services. The evaluation is also likely to conclude that the quality, availability and accuracy of data are essential conditions to generate reliable insight on student wellbeing.

Possible Next Steps

The recent developments outlined above are undoubtedly helpful in progressing analytics. They address the primary concerns of HEPs by generating greater clarity on the efficacy of analytics as a tool to support student wellbeing, as well as by providing guidance for HEPs to improve their institutional data maturity. However, it is not known if these developments will fully address the obstacles that HEPs have indicated they face, or if they will encourage more HEPs to consider implementing wellbeing analytics. In order to address these remaining barriers, the following activities are suggested:

Survey of HEPs' views on Wellbeing Analytics

A survey of HEPs might elicit additional information which may be used to better understand where support or clarification are needed to encourage the adoption of wellbeing analytics. The survey could focus on the following areas:

- Their understanding of wellbeing analytics and the benefits it might bring.
- The barriers to adopting analytics and what might be needed to address them.
- Their thoughts on whether more could be done (and how) to champion wellbeing analytics at an institutional and sector level.
- Their thoughts on the institutional changes needed to fully leverage the benefits of wellbeing analytics, for example through service or system redesign.

To generate a broad understanding of this topic, it might be most helpful to share this survey with a range of colleagues and networks. For example, student support colleagues (via AMOSSHE), digital/information technology colleagues (via Jisc or UCISA), and senior academic colleagues (via AdvanceHE's DVC/PVC Network).

However, there is a risk that this will not generate additional understanding that is not already known. Additionally, response rates may be poor, as evidenced in previous sector surveys.

Wellbeing Analytics Community of Practice

There are several HEPs who are innovating in this space and who are leveraging data to better target their wellbeing support interventions. There are limited opportunities for these institutions to share good practice, perhaps due to a lack of facilitation and leadership. To address this, one option might be to convene a small group of trailblazer HEPs. This group would be outcome-driven and action-oriented, developing helpful outputs (such as case studies, implementation stories and impact evaluations) that would be shared with the sector. Existing, similar groups (such as Jisc's Learning Analytics Community) are not currently focussed on progressing wellbeing analytics as their core mission. This new group could be chaired by the HE Student Support Champion, who would support the group to optimise their outputs to achieve the greatest traction with senior leaders.

Student Support Redesign Project

Under the auspices of his role as the HE Student Support Champion, Edward Peck will soon be initiating a project with AdvanceHE to look at Student Support Redesign. This work is a follow-on from the [Student Needs Framework](#) that was developed by Edward, AdvanceHE and UUK's Student Policy Network in 2023. It is expected that an output of this work will include a framework of principles for effective student support design. The project will consider how the implementation of analytics – and other data systems - might transform the design or delivery of support within a HEP.

Discussion Points

- Do you agree with the articulation of the challenges?
- How far do the recent publications go in addressing these challenges?
- Which of the proposed activities should be taken forward? Why?
- What more/else is needed to support HEPs in their journey to implement analytics?
What in addition could the Taskforce do?