Abstract

There is abundant evidence that student-professional role transition can be problematic and stressful for new graduates. It is therefore important to understand how new graduates go from the role of a student to that of a professional, which is the focus of this chapter. The chapter starts by clarifying the key concept of role transition, followed by discussions on the distinguishing characteristics between students and professionals. Drawing on the literature from pedagogical learning, organisational socialisation and role identity, the author proposes a process model (*PETI*: *P* = Preparing; *E* = Entering, *T* = Transforming, and *I* = Identifying) to extend our understanding of the student-professional role transition. The chapter concludes with an agenda for future research in the area.

Key words: role transition, organisational socialisation, work place entry, graduate, adaptation

Author biography: Dr Jenny Chen is a Senior Lecturer in the Bristol Business School at the University of the West of England. Her research interests include identity construction, graduate employability, organisational socialisation and career transition processes in the workplace.

<Chapter number>

Ready to Get On Board? Facilitating Role Transition of New Graduates

Jenny Chen

Introduction

Role transition is often a normative yet challenging process. Studies show that many recent graduates leave their first post-grad jobs for less than one year (Sturges and Guest, 2001; Marshall and Butler, 2015). Organizational support and individual proactive behaviours are all seen to impact on employees' decisions of staying or leaving the company after organizational entry (Ashforth et al., 2007; Tharenou and Kulik, 2020). For college students, the ability of successfully forming and developing professional identities influences the extent to which new graduates can cope with forthcoming challenges at work (Trede et al., 2012). If new graduates manage this student-professional role transition process well, it boosts their confidence and enables them to construct professional identities faster; if not, it can decrease their functioning and induce anxiety (Robbin and Wilner, 2001).

To facilitate role transition after graduation, most universities provide work-integrated learning opportunities such as fieldwork and internship (Nadelson et al., 2017). However, empirical evidence still shows that new graduates are not prepared to meet work expectations after entering organisations (Trede et al., 2012). The knowledge on how graduates construct their professional identities at the workplace is also relatively limited (Nadelson, et al., 2017). Accordingly, this chapter identifies the key themes and concepts that underpin the role transition from student to professional. Specifically, this chapter covers questions like: What are the key differences between being students and professionals? How do recent graduates

adapt successfully after entering the workplace? How do graduates make use of personal and contextual resources to facilitate their professional role learning?

By integrating the broader research lines of pedagogical learning, organisational socialisation and role identity, I develop a four-stage *PETI* (*P* = Preparing; *E* = Entering, *T* = Transforming, and *I* = Identifying) model to illustrate key processes involved in the role transition from student to professional. This model can be used by educators, career consultants, new graduates and practitioners when considering the psychological and behavioural aspects to facilitate student-profession role transition. This chapter first clarifies the fundamental concepts of role transition, followed by discussions on key differences between being students and professionals. After this, a *PETI* model is introduced and discussed, including a series of stages and influential factors. The chapter closes by discussing future research directions.

Role transition

Broadly speaking, role transition refers to 'the process through which individuals psychologically (and if relevant, physically) exit one role and enter another' (Ashforth, 2001, p. 167). This role transition process does not happen within one day but is a continuous change process. Individuals' prior learning and experiences influence subsequently transition and outcomes. This chapter focuses on how new graduates navigate their role transition to construct their professional identities in their initial employment. A professional role here reflects specialised knowledge, certain tasks and associated accountabilities embedded in the social system, and a professional identity occurs when an individual occupies a role and then identifies the self by the role (Ashforth, 2001; Pratt, 2006).

From the literature in Higher Education, the key perspectives exploring the student-professional role transition lie in the contextual predictors of professional identities, such as practice-based pedagogical learning (Clouder, 2005), and the dynamic processes of the development and construction professional identities in the academic learning environment (Reid et al., 2008). Clearly, college learning promotes students' professional identity development, but as Trede et al. (2012) noticed, researchers have also shown an abundant interest in exploring how individuals form their professional identities at work (e.g., Ibarra, 1999; Prett et al., 2006). That being said, although previous management studies also emphasise the pre-socialisation stage (e.g., Wendlandt and Rochlen, 2008, Tharenou and Kulik, 2020), these studies usually adopt a limited time frame, focusing primarily to the prior-entry workplace experiences such as recruitment and selection or newcomers' existing institutional assumptions, without really linking to new graduates' learning experience at college. Without a more complete understanding of graduates' experiences before and after graduation, it is not possible to combine both educators and management when discussing how to help new graduates develop professional identities at work.

Role requirements: Students vs professionals

As a means of facilitating discussions on role transition from students to professionals, a summary of distinguishing characteristics of role requirements is developed (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 here

Task features

When individuals view themselves as 'students', they are supposed to be engaged in academic activities such as attending lectures and seminars, preparing and doing assignments

and examinations given by tutors and professors. Learning arrangements in the college are often structured and formalised, and they are incorporated into the curriculum to help students progress gradually. Long holiday periods and reading weeks (non-teaching weeks) also provide students with much autonomous time to explore and engage in extracurricular and student-led learning activities (Macaskill and Taylor, 2010). Experience shows that effective time management is a skill that undergraduate and postgraduate students often take time to master (Fazey and Fazey, 2001).

On the other hand, being a professional implies that an individual is not only supposed to complete the allocated tasks by management, take new challenges and make decisions when necessary, but may also have to manage upwards and feed their own views (Pfeffer, 2010), for example, by suggesting solutions to problems and letting managers know their preferences. It must be noted, however, that daily routine tasks (e.g., meetings, checking invoices) are also an essential part of professionals' work role, which may be repetitive and learning may not always occur, although self-directed learning is often encouraged and promoted at the workplace (Noe et al., 2014). Moreover, unlike students, professionals may be less likely to have frequent breaks and holidays, and, perhaps due to task interdependence, they may have less control over time-management.

Social interactions

At college, the role of the student is complementary to the counter-role of tutors and professors. When a student acts like a student by attending lectures and doing assignments, this in turn allows tutors and professors to carry out their obligations and verify their role identities. Indeed, the pedagogical literature has indicated that student identity is shaped through social contacts with tutors, professors and classmates. Interactions with tutors and

professors facilitate students' academic achievements, while informal contacts with classmates can help to develop voluntary friendships and improve the enjoyment of college life (Anderson and Fowers, 2020).

In contrast, professionals are normally embedded within manager-subordinate relationships at work, which are often based on the power structure in the organisation. They may need to work with a more diverse group of colleagues (e.g., age, ethnicity, work experience) and/or clients (e.g., expectations, requirements, personality traits). Professionals also form and develop workplace friendships, but studies show some potential risks associated with workplace friendships, such as conflict of interest situations (Berman et al., 2002).

Thinking patterns

Thinking patterns, also understood as mental models or mindsets, concern how people think (Senge, 1990). Students may be inclined to cultivate a process-oriented mindset: it is the process of learning that matters. In a related vein, as college learning often consists of different assignments and activities, this can also result on a short and event-focused mindset. In addition, although the relationship between students and the college is not a superficial consumer transaction purely based on economic value, there is a growing tendency towards being more market-driven (Brown and Carasso, 2013). Such changes that have taken place in higher education may further influence students' wider sense of the self as service-users associated with rights as fee-payers (Tomlinson, 2017).

At the workplace, managers are different from tutors and professors. They are responsible for the whole team's performance, not just for one person's learning, and need to report satisfactory progress to their own managers. They may be less likely to tolerate errors and

delay as the quality of individual's performance can influence team performance and effectiveness (Mathieu et al., 2008). After all, professionals get paid to deliver and add value to the organisation and its clients. Therefore, they are more likely to develop result-oriented mindsets, with the emphasis on delivery and outcomes. Related to this, some workplace projects may last a few years, and a continuous learning mindset may be encouraged after entering the workplace. In fact, to provide good service to the clients, professionals often see themselves as continuous learners to improve the procedures and products. Managers can provide inputs and/or resources, but it is the professional's own responsibility to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills to be a professional.

Levels of responsibility

University students are experiencing a life developmental phase called 'emerging adulthood', which offers more freedom compared with adolescence, and less responsibility compared with adulthood (Arnett, 2000). No matter whether individuals like it or not, responsibility directs how individuals react to rules and situations (Frink and Klimoski, 1998). As students, they are agents of their own learning and academic achievement. If they are internally obligated to take the ownership of learning, they are more likely to build up knowledge and achieve academic success. However, given that students have not practised as full professional members, they would not have experienced the responsibilities and hold more formal obligations (i.e., accountability) associated with professional roles.

Compared with students, professionals are not just being responsible for the quality of their own work but also being answerable for any deviations from professional conduct and ethical standards (Vriens et al., 2018). For example, when facing an ethical dilemma, solicitors must follow a code of conduct and make ethical judgments when providing

services. In this way, it allows the occupants of counter-roles (e.g., a judge in this case) to carry out their duties. Similarly, other professionals such as nurses are also required to be accountable for their ethical behaviours and conduct (NMC, 2008).

An integrative model: From students to professionals

Drawing on studies on pedagogical learning, organisational socialisation, and role identity, an integrative *PETI* model is developed by focusing new graduates' experiences of student-professional role transition. As illustrated in Figure 1, college learning and social interactions with educators and alumni serve as critical resources to help new graduates reduce surprises and uncertainties after organisational entry. This in turn further facilitates student role exit and professional role learning, and, accordingly, professional identification. The *PETI* model also acknowledges individual and situational factors in this role transition process. Details are illustrated and discussed below.

Insert Figure 1 here

Stage 1: Preparing – learning at college

A critical issue across professions is that the expectations, standards and rules have been established in the social systems before individuals enter (Ibarra, 1999). Once new graduates join the organisation, they would be expected to act professionally even if they may have not fully understood or internalised professional standards and role requirements. To make it possible, learning at college plays a key role in preparing new graduates get ready for the role transition at work (Reid et al., 2008). For example, learning technical terms and specialised knowledge of the discipline provide a starting point with which college students can identify. Trede and colleagues (2012) further suggested that the college provides a rich setting for

students to acquire pre-professional identities through learning specialised knowledge. Jackson (2016) also emphasised the essence of 'embracing pre-professional identity' into college learning.

Moreover, to facilitate new graduates' adaptation into work environments, considerable efforts have been expended on designing work-related pedagogical curricula and providing a work-like learning environment. For example, Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) found that fieldwork may have the most influence on professional identity development due to the extensive opportunities to experiment with the professional role. Nadelson and colleagues (2017) further found that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students were more likely to develop professional identities if they engaged in learning activities that were similar to the working activities of STEM professionals. In this sense, work-like learning helps new graduates understand professional roles and prepare for the anticipatory student-professional role transition at work.

Moreover, Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) found that students' prior teachers can be an inspiring drive for those students to enter the profession in the first place. Jensen and Jetten (2016) also suggested that social interactions between students and faculty members are essential for students to develop some awareness of a professional identity. That being said, it is worth noting that they did not find any evidence to show that social interactions with peers can also support the development of professional identity. However, social interaction with alumni may help students keep up to date on the professional development, and this may be useful in preparing new graduates for the upcoming role transition at the workplace.

Stage 2: Entering - confronting role differences and uncertainty

After entering the organisation, Louis (1980) pointed out that individuals were inclined to appraise their environment by interrelating new settings with their previous experiences. As discussed in Table 1, students and professionals may experience different role requirements and expectations. These distinguishing characteristics can bring surprises and a 'transition shock' after new graduates enter the workplace (Duchscher, 2009), especially for those who have no experience of work-like learning (e.g., internship and fieldwork). These negative entry experiences may be related to a lack of understanding of the profession (Olson and Bialocerkowski 2014).

Moreover, the student-professional role transition is associated with potential threats of identity change as new graduates will have to, sooner or later, accommodate themselves to different professional role expectations and requirements, and let go of their student identity which had formed a part of the self. This thus opens the possibility of experiencing identity lingering (Wittman, 2019): when new graduates face challenges and difficult situations at work, they may continuously posturing themselves as students who are learning at workplace instead of professional workers delivering values and impacts at work. Such sustained illusion allows new graduates to stay in the comfort zone and protect their self-views and psychological well-being (Folkman and Lazarus, 1984), but enduring lingering identities can result in ongoing struggles to meet external work requirements and being internally "stuck in the past" (Wittman, 2019).

Stage 3: Transforming - exiting student identity and deepening new role learning

The role transition involves a process of leaving a former role or 'losing some familiarity' while moving into a new role (Marshall and Butler, 2015). The former role here refers to the certain tasks and behaviours associated with the student identity; whereas the new role means

the professional worker associated with relevant expectations, standards and rules at work. To strip away values and beliefs associated with the student identity, leaving room for new professional roles, individuals need to distance themselves from familiar cues that may activate their established self-views (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). For example, new graduates can tailor their social interactions by creating more opportunities to communicate with colleagues and other professionals in after-work social events, rather than just staying within the existing social networking with prior friends and classmates. Through more contacts with professionals, graduates can acquire a way of thinking and acting like professionals by imitation, and leave their student role behind. Further, to avoid the continuity of student identity at work, new graduates could start with relatively small changes such as dressing, body and written language and then move towards more complexed changes like values, beliefs and working styles. All of these changes are necessary to reflect a professional identity at the individual level.

Further, to satisfy the needs of reducing discrepancies between student and professional role expectations, new graduates can employ psychological tools to maintain the sense of self-control and reduce potential stresses during role transition. Here, one of these tools is positive framing. This is a cognitive self-management mechanism enabling new members 'to alter their understanding of a situation by explicitly controlling the cognitive frame they place on the situation' (Ashford and Blacks, 1996, p. 202). In the organisational socialisation literature, positive framing is found to be a useful coping mechanism to facilitate the process of fitting in (Kim et al., 2005) and to increase job satisfaction in the early tenure (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Positively framing the process of exiting the student identity may help graduates foster the personal resource of positive affect to counteract potential negative emotions and stress (Tice et al., 2007).

Having discussed the potential challenges associated with the entry stage, we will now discuss three proactive behaviours that can facilitate professional role learning. First, grounded in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), professional role learning involves observing the context, including people and situational cues, to learn the role and standardised ways of doing things (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Ashford and Black, 1996). Observation is useful to understand the discrepancies between standards and actual responses, which can motivate the change of behaviour to measure up to these role standards (Bandura, 1977). Miller and Jablin (1991) suggested that new members are able to learn about role requirements by observing their colleagues' behaviours that result in rewards or punishments. Takeuchi and Takeuchi (2009) also emphasised the role of observing role models by comparing themselves with more experienced co-workers.

Second, when young professionals observe others, they generate a repertoire of potential identities that serve as the basis for 'experimenting their provisional selves' by testing themselves in the practices (Ibarra, 1999). While individuals may develop a different repertoire of selves due to different prior experiences and social influences (Slay and Smith, 2011), research has confirmed the use of experimenting as a strategy for role learning. Ibarra (1999) suggested that experimenting can help to 'bridge the gap between their current capacities and self-conceptions and the representations they hold about what attitudes and behaviours are expected in the new role' (p. 765). In the organisational socialisation literature, experimenting, as a proactive behaviour, also facilitates role learning and facilitate newcomer adaptation (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992; Cooper-Thomas and Burke, 2012).

Further, it is known that contextual uncertainty will stimulate transforming self-conception and assimilating all aspects of ones' attitudes, feelings and behaviours to the in-group prototype (Hogg, 2000). This is unlike the learning experience at college, where tutors and professors help students confront misconceptions, and the minds of the students are usually in good care. Personalised advice and feedback are often provided through assignments and personal meetings at college. At the workplace, new members are expected to seek feedback proactively from insiders and acquire the necessary information to perform the tasks (Allen et al., 2017). Those who make the effort of seeking feedback from role models have more opportunities to efficiently interpret professional behavioural standards and role requirements. Prior socialisation literature has indeed suggested that feedback-seeking is associated with better role learning, task mastery and lower attention to leave (Vandenberghe et al., 2021).

Individual characteristics and organisational practices of role transition

Research on role transition and organisational socialisation also emphasises the importance of individual characteristics and organisational practices (Allen et al., 2017; Tharenou and Kulik, 2020). Understanding individual characteristics helps to improve our insights on what types of individuals are more likely engage in role learning and developing professional identities. Identification of organisational practices can also help to design effective interventions to facilitate student-professional role transition. In the following, the impacts of individual characteristics (personal traits and social-economic status) on role transition are discussed first, followed by organisational practices (organisational socialisation tactics and social support).

Previous empirical studies have identified various individual differences that may influence new members' behaviours and performance after organisational entry. For example, research has shown that new members' desire and abilities to learn can influence their adjustment (Ashforth et al., 2007); and new members' curiosity serves as an antecedent to taking charge and job performance (Harrison et al., 2011). Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that those from a higher socio-economic status have more social capital than those with lower socio-economic status (Tierney and Jun, 2001). Research has shown that social capital has a significant impact on the growth and identity development of college students (Tierney, 2000). Those graduates with more social capital and networks may have more chances to meet and interact with people holding similar professional roles (e.g., parents and other family members). This experience can also benefit professional role identification at work.

Further, formalised and structured organisational socialisation tactics are found out to facilitate new member adaptation and role learning (Jones, 1986). In particular, Prett (2000) treated divestiture tactics as a 'sense breaking' practice to influence members' self-evaluation. Contrary to investiture tactics, divestiture tactics invalidate the self by disconfirming the 'incoming identity' of a new member (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Hence, under divestiture tactics, new members are more likely to alter the self, increasing professional role learning. In addition, social support also appears to be essential to speed up role learning and adaptation (Korte and Lin, 2013). Supervisors and line managers are commonly considered as essential agents in supporting employees to realise their obligations to the organisation. With social support, new graduates are likely to assume that the environment in the new workplace is friendly and supportive, which may contribute to their

information acquisition. It seems logical to expect new graduates with such social support to learn new role behaviours and standards more readily.

Stage 4: Identifying – being a professional member

Given the distinguishing characteristics of being students and professionals, as illustrated in Table 1, the role transition process does not always occur successfully, and some graduates may fail to develop professional identities at work. Individuals are expected to resolve the challenges associated with a previous stage before transitioning to the next stage (Ashforth et al., 2007). New graduates who have successfully gone through the professional role learning should ultimately come to this stage of identifying with the profession. When conceptualising the self as 'professional', one's professional identity serves as an organising framework for an individual's self-concept (Stryker, 2007). The construction of a professional identity offers the meaning and purpose for individuals (Caza and Creary, 2016). Individuals who behave and act as members of the profession are highly identified with their professions and see their own beliefs about the profession as self-defining (Pratt, 1998, 2000).

Further, one's professional identity provides behavioural guidance (Ibarra, 1999). When graduates fulfil professional role requirements and provide profession-defined quality and service to the clients, they are more likely to achieve social recognition and gain credibility. Yet one can imagine a new graduate being rejected by the other group members due to the misalignment with professional standards and work styles. Such deviations seem to easily evoke more disliking and stress in the workplace (Janssen, 2003). This is not hard to understand from the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971), which suggests that people sharing similar characteristics are attracted to each other and generally have better affective consequences than people who are different. According to this principle of functional

antagonism, existing members display interpersonal attraction toward those new members who share similar attitudes and perspectives. When new graduates align with professional role standards, they are thus more welcomed and accepted. Otherwise, they may face negative consequences including exclusion from formal and informal interactions.

Identifying with the profession also indicates long-term commitment (Bucher and Stelling, 1977). New professionals continue to accumulate relevant knowledge and skills and to provide profession-defined quality (Freidson, 2001). In this way, the professional role identity is internalised as a cognitive framework influencing how individuals think, behave and feel. In Tan et al.'s (2017) study, they also stated that 'professional identity is the self that has been developed with the commitment to perform competently and legitimately in the context of the profession' (p. 1505).

Practical implications

To facilitate seamless student-professional role transition, it becomes important for college students to not only acquire specialised knowledge and techniques but also to improve their awareness of profession-defined behaviours and standards to reduce potential surprises after entering the organisation. In addition, given that traditional academic training may not address the practical work-related problems directly, instructors are expected to include more work-related information in the delivery and cultivate a work-like learning environment whenever possible. In doing so, students have more chances to apply what they learnt in the work settings and therefore reduce unrealistic expectations which may in turn facilitate transition after graduation.

Moreover, the differences between students and professionals go further than knowledge and skill sets, as shown in ==Table 1==, but also include levels of responsibility and thinking patterns. Thus, the student-professional role differences and their associated implications for role transition after organisational entry should become a part of employability programmes, along with other training like how to develop a CV and advice on job hunting. These structured programmes can help to improve the awareness of differences and future challenges, help graduates prepare for the potential surprises and get ready for anticipatory changes after organisational entry.

Further, as new graduates progress from stages of entering to transforming, their professional role learning becomes increasingly reliant on organisational and social support (Boulamatsi et al., 2020). The *PETI* model indicates that organisational socialisation tactics and social support are essential to facilitate role change and reduce anxiety during the transforming stage. Managers are thus encouraged to motivate more tenured employees to support new graduates' adjustment and develop professional identities. Perhaps, a well-designed mentoring programme or buddy system can be used to provide new graduates with an opportunity to deepen their learning about the profession, to help them internalise the professional rules and values, and to facilitate their role transition.

Future research directions

To take a step further, researchers can find ways to study the entire spectrum of professional identity construction by connecting the developmental roots of professional choices. As we know, the formulation and development of professional preferences is a lifelong journey. The *PETI* model discussed in this chapter attempts to bridge the episodes before and after college graduation, but the importance of childhood and adolescence cannot be ignored. It would be

interesting to explore if there are any psychological differences in role transition at different stages of life. It is likely that the exploration of how individuals gradually developed their occupational preferences and constructed their professional identities may not only help to refine the theory surrounding the role transition literature but may also provide practical insights for educators and recent graduates on how to adapt to the workplace and build up professional identity smoothly.

Moreover, it has been noted that graduates do not always follow the anticipated professions after graduation. For example, a law school student may choose to become an HRM officer instead of pursuing a career as a solicitor. Research can strive to investigate whether internal personal characteristics or critical events in their college learning may have influence their professional choices to ones not directly relevant to their subjects/disciplines after graduation. It may be useful to determine whether there are any differences in terms of professional identity construction for those graduates who change professions. Also, given the time and resources needed to learn the specialised knowledge at college, it may be useful for researchers to found out how students perceive their fit towards the profession while still at college, and whether their perceived fit affects their role transition after graduation.

Additionally, it is worth noting that most empirical studies investigating role transition experiences are based on western contexts such as the United States. Although it is likely that some of the findings may be true for a non-western context, the student-professional transition process may have new characteristics in other cultures. In fact, research has shown that in Asian cultures such as that in China, employees' behaviours and attitudes are deeply influenced by the Confucianism that emphasises collectivism and interpersonal harmony (Hwang, 1987). Therefore, it may be interesting to explore whether there are key features

observed in western graduates during role transition similar to those of graduates from eastern cultures, or do eastern graduates report different challenges during role transition after graduation? And although the available population necessarily becomes more limited, it would be interesting to explore the role transition of students from one culture moving to another culture. It is believed that examining this issue in a non-western context may expand our view and understanding about how professional identity construction works across cultural boundaries.

Finally, this chapter mainly focuses on one side of the coin - recent graduates' behaviours during the student-professional role transition. It is reasonable to expect they may also experience cognitive (e.g., linear –> non-linear reasoning) and emotional (e.g., moody –> stable) changes during role transition. If so, then to what extent do cognitive changes interact with contextual factors to influence new graduates' construction of professional identities at work? Are there distinct patterns of relationships between cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes? How do new graduates manage their emotions when faced with surprises and uncertainties during organisational entry? What other contextual factors, beyond organisational socialisation tactics and social support, influence cognitive and emotional changes? Such analysis certainly invites further research to advance insights for improving the learning and working experience to achieve the desired professional identity effectively.

Conclusion

With an increasingly agile workforce, it becomes more essential for new graduates to understand how to be able to transition into professional roles more effectively and function as professional employees fast. To maximise the benefit from their recruitment process, it is

equally essential for organisations to determine how to facilitate the transition of new graduates into their workplaces. In this chapter, drawing on the literature from pedagogical learning, organisational socialisation and role identity, the *PETI* model is developed focusing on how new graduates form and develop their professional identities. By discussing such a process model, this chapter helps to advance our understanding of the student-professional role transition and should stimulate further thinking and research on role transition into post-graduation employment.

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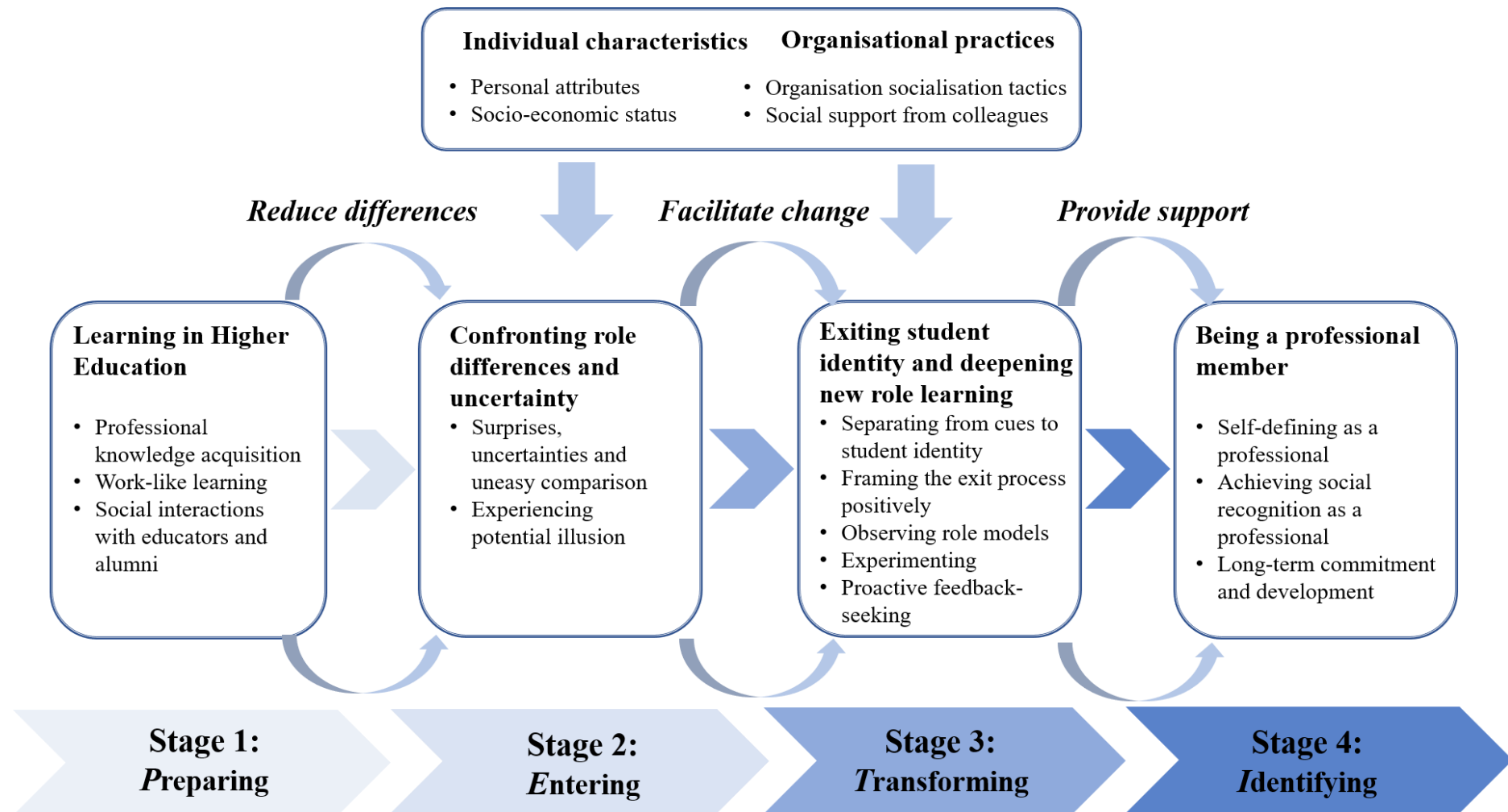Figure 1 The *PETI* model of role transition from student to professional

Individual characteristics
- Personal attributes
- Socio-economic status

Organisational practices
- Organisation socialisation tactics
- Social support from colleagues

Reduce differences   *Facilitate change*   *Provide support*

Learning in Higher Education
- Professional knowledge acquisition
- Work-like learning
- Social interactions with educators and alumni

Confronting role differences and uncertainty
- Surprises, uncertainties and uneasy comparison
- Experiencing potential illusion

Exiting student identity and deepening new role learning
- Separating from cues to student identity
- Framing the exit process positively
- Observing role models
- Experimenting
- Proactive feedback-seeking

Being a professional member
- Self-defining as a professional
- Achieving social recognition as a professional
- Long-term commitment and development

Stage 1: *Preparing*

Stage 2: *Entering*

Stage 3: *Transforming*

Stage 4: *Identifying*

Table 1 Summary of different key aspects of role requirements of students and professionals

	Students		Professionals
Task features	*Generic learning-oriented activities*	→	*Value-based impacts at work*
	- structured and organised learning activities - tasks assigned by tutors - relatively more autonomous time		- new challenges and decision-making, but often routine tasks - manage upwards if necessary - less control over irregular events
Social interactions	*Homogeneous and affect-based*	→	*Diverse and collaborative*
	- tutor/professor-student - classmates of relatively similar backgrounds - voluntary friendships		- manager-subordinate - colleagues and/or clients with more diverse backgrounds - work-based relationships
Thinking patterns	*Process-oriented with short-term focus*	→	*Result-driven with long-term focus*
	- process-oriented, focusing on learning - relatively short and event-focused - perhaps with a customer mindset		- result-driven, focusing on delivery and outcomes - continuously improving - team- and/or client-focused
Levels of responsibility	*Self-focused and relatively simplistic*	→	*Profession-defined and more complex*
	- following academic and research ethical standards - being responsible for one's own learning outcomes - holding responsibility if deviations occur		- accepting and internalising professional ethical standards - being responsible for the quality of one's own work - taking responsibility if deviations occur