

Student 'Peer Mentoring'

Centre for Learning and Study Support (CLaSS) working in Partnership with Course Teams

Overview

CLaSS are leading a pilot peer mentoring project (Oct 08 - May 09) which is faculty owned and student led.

Four courses in the faculties of Humanities and Business and Law are participating in the pilot: Single honours Media and Advertising and Joint honours Education and Law.

2nd year students have volunteered to be peer mentors to 1st year students following the same course.

Aims

1. To support first year students in their transition to and engagement with the Higher Education learning process
2. To develop the personal and academic skills of the mentors.

Objectives:

- help students engage/understand more about their own learning.
- enhance the level of understanding of subject matter of their course.
- increase student awareness of support services.
- improve signposting to other support services.
- develop student responsibility for own learning.
- increase confidence and facilitate appropriate help seeking.
- develop cooperative learning.
- help mentors develop/acquire key and employability skills.

Recruitment and Training

33 mentors have been recruited and trained. Topics included in the training are: data protection, where to go if....., support services in the University, reflective listening skills, questioning tips, electronic communication via Blackboard, personal reflections of year 1, how groups work.

Initial training is supported by on-going meetings.

Models of delivery

Models of delivery are varied, including 1-1, pairs of mentors working with groups of first year students, random matching of mentors and mentees and planned matching e.g., Education and English mentors working with Education and English mentees.

Communication methods include a combination of electronic and face to face. A Blackboard Community has been created to support the communication process.

Initial mentee feedback

"Very helpful, good idea for first years to have someone to talk to."

"This was a really helpful experience, and it gave me a chance to ask questions I wanted to ask. Good way to get in contact with the years above, and get their opinions and ideas on what to look forward to. Thank for this opportunity."

"It feels a relief to know there is someone to help you, who's done what you are doing."

"Glad I'm participating in the 'scheme'."

Initial mentor feedback

"First meeting today which was very positive, although some were unable to attend we agreed to meet Monday. We spent our time getting to know the group and we will be meeting later this month to discuss their assessments."

"After our initial meeting yesterday I felt really pleased that one year 1 students we had spoken to yesterday stopped me in the corridor to express how glad she was that she had agreed to participate in the scheme. With a year of venturing into the "unknown" ahead of us, my confidence has already has a significant boost and hopefully her positive experience will attract others to the scheme."

"Just had a meeting and I feel it went very well, I have their contact details and have told them to let me know how they're getting on and I'll see them soon."

"Useful, as provides evidence for CV and what employers want to see"

Evaluation

The project is being reviewed and evaluated on an on-going basis, reporting the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

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