

Embedding personal tutoring in the Curriculum

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Context –

- ★ Widening participation = diversity and lack of understanding of demands of learning in HE environment.
- ★ Wider initiatives to improve student experience and student progression/retention (National Audit Office 2002),
- ★ Personal Tutoring Review – culminating in new policy in 2005

University Policy

- ★ Aims to improve the student experience and to improve retention and progression
- ★ Sets out minimum requirements for tutoring
 - Regular personal tutoring sessions
 - Opportunity for students to integrate academically and socially at start of studies



Developing a tutorial support system

- ★ 3 models of support systems
 - The pastoral model
 - The professional model
 - The curriculum model(Earwaker in Owen 2002)



The Pastoral Model

- ★ SABE tutors considered the pastoral model as the ideal, but felt that it was difficult to implement in the context of larger and more diverse groups of students
- ★ Reliant on effective communication between tutors and students which is difficult to develop where tutors did not teach first year students

The Curriculum Model

★ Advantages

- Identifies roles and responsibilities of students and personal tutors
- Clearly integrates with teaching and learning.
- Supported by structured tutorials
- Enables more positive tutoring relationships with students via regular and focussed meetings.

★ Potential problems

- Identifying space in the curriculum
- Concerns that academic roles might be perceived as outweighing wider pastoral roles

The Pilot – 2004-5

- ★ Developed for Tourism Students
- ★ Delivered through a 15 credit module in L4.
Focussed on developing
 - key skills
 - Understanding about the university systems, and procedures
 - Understanding of the personal tutorial system
- ★ Group tutorials to formalise, intensify and enhance interaction between students and their tutors in the first semester

Implementing the system across the School of Architecture and the Built Environment.



- ★ Recognising diversity of our programmes and identifying the best place to develop interaction between staff and students
- ★ Ensuring staff are trained and have commitment to delivering the system

Advantages of a curriculum led approach

- ★ Enables tutors and students to develop relationships
- ★ Brings tutors into mainstream learning activities
- ★ Providing a place where the attitudes of students and their learning experiences can be explored and discussed
- ★ Group tutorials foster a sense of group identity

Evaluating the system

- ★ The system is reviewed annually across the School to identify any emerging themes, tensions, inconsistencies and best practice.
- ★ Annual University-wide monitoring
- ★ School results in the National Students Survey (2007, 2008) are now better than the results for the University as a whole.



Current developments

- ★ The system is currently being developed
 - to increase the range of PDP materials available to students
 - to provide opportunities for communication with personal tutors on wider aspects of learning and development.
- ★ Investigating ways of strengthening links between careers advisors and personal tutors.



Conclusions

- ★ Integrating personal tutoring into mainstream teaching and learning activities
 - improved engagement of students and staff
 - provided a model which was replicable across the School and did not require intensive “championing” to ensure its survival.

