

Round table 18

Session's theme: Supporting student learning

Paper number: 50

Presenters: William Carey

Presenters' Organisation: The University of Manchester

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: 'My, My, My..., What?, How...?' Peer Support: Is it a good thing?

Who cares?

Abstract:

The University of Manchester operates two complimentary forms of Peer Support engaging over 1500 higher year students through Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) and Peer Mentoring. Over 95% of all first year students have access to this support. Both models have been in operation since 1995 and now operate in over 60 disciplines, supporting in excess of 6000 students.

Peer Support has defined aims and objectives:

- To enhance the quality, quantity and diversity of Student Learning within a discipline
- To involve students as partners in their learning experience
- To provide further opportunity for the development of intellectual and professional competencies
- To provide students with a supportive environment to assist the transition into and throughout Higher Education

But, how are these aims measured? Can Key Performance Indicators be defined?

Whilst there is evidence from wide ranging literature indicating Peer Support does impact positively on FYE, the question **still** remains 'How can we evidence impact?! Evidence is often required in the context of an individual institution thereby creating a challenge to make the local activity relevant whilst not 'reinventing the wheel'.

This session will, through active discussions, encourage participants to address key questions including:

- Why do we measure impact?
- What do we want to know? / What do others want to know?
- How can we evidence impact in the context of our institution?

Through the experience of all participants, the facilitator will:

- share an evolving approach being developed at The University of Manchester
- consider the impact results from a series of local evaluations and,
- encourage participants to consider and share their approaches to evaluation