

Show and tell 8

Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 27

Presenters: PhD Terhi Skaniakos, PhD Leena Penttinen, Professor Marjatta Lairio, Leena Penttinen, Marjatta Lairio

Presenters' Organisation: University of Jyväskylä

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Peer mentors experiences of mentoring programs in Finnish higher education

Abstract:

In many universities there are peer mentoring programs which aim to assist first-year students transition into academic life. With the concept of peer we refer to someone with the same or nearly equal status as the person being tutored. The aim of the peer mentoring programs is to provide a system which effectively aids the student to the new educational culture. Most often peer mentoring takes place during the first weeks and months of the studies and the mentors are students in senior position on the same field of study. The mentoring includes orientation to practical issues and social support, but also academic support. Most studies focus on the mentees experiences.

In this poster we focus at the peer mentors' self-reported experiences of mentoring. We are interested in mentors' experiences: aims and contents of the peer mentoring activities, the pedagogy involved, as well as their collaboration involving other guidance providers. The role of the peer mentor is contemplated within the framework of the Borgen & Amundson's structured group counseling activities.

The collaboration aspects are based on the holistic career guidance model of Watts & van Esbroeck. The analysis is based on Internet questionnaire responses, collected in 2010 (N=795) from 13 Research Universities (RU) and Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). It involves statistical analysis of the numeric data and thematic content analysis of the open answers.

The mentors have generally been satisfied with both, the training and the actual mentoring. They named psycho-social issues as the most important area of their work. However, study planning was reported an area, in which the students have the greatest need for guidance. Being a mentor has increased their general level of activity as a student. In order to develop mentoring, the mentors desire for more extensive and effective cooperation with the staff.

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Paper number: 28

Presenters: Elina Lehkonen, Jukka Parviainen

Presenters' Organisation: Aalto University School of Science

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Creating systematic guidelines for student engagement at the School of Science

Abstract:

In spring 2010 Teaching and Education Evaluation (TEE) was executed at the Aalto University. The evaluation produced information for developing teaching and education. As a result the ongoing project 'Student care and support' was launched. The project was one of strategic initiatives in autumn 2012 at the Aalto University School of Science (Aalto SCI). The project is focused on students, their studies and well-being and creating practices to support them.

In poster we show some practical achievements during the first year. At Aalto SCI all new students are given a systematic handshake by orientation week (e.g. SCI Get-together event, study planning practicums) and orientation to studies. There has also been a new form of guidance learning counselor available for students (face-to-face guidance on study skills and workshops). A students well-being survey is collected in the spring.

As a result every degree programme will put together actions for advancing students well-being together with students, guilds and faculty. Focus on the project has been on preventive actions and developing systematic model for monitoring students progress of studies. Staff tutors meet new students in personal meetings and talk about student s study plan. Students progress of first year studies has also been proactively monitored by looking credit units and personally contacting students.

One goal of this project has been to enhance student centric learning environment. Co-operation between guilds and faculty is strong including collaboration agreements between guilds and degree programmes. Guilds play an active role in students engagement to university studies, e.g. peer tutors. There is also an ongoing project called POP (For better learning) in which students and staff members carry out concrete projects together, e.g. changing library into a learning space.

Keywords: student engagement, study skills, student s well-being, learning community

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Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 30

Presenters: Eeva Miettinen

Presenters' Organisation: Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Student tutor -a tour guide to the university world

Abstract:

The Faculty of Science is big unit in the University of Helsinki. The student admission is annually over one thousand, but only about 300 Masters of Science graduate. As a significant part of the student population never graduate retention is a big problem in the Faculty of Science. New student s commitment to studying in the Faculty has been a subject of discussion.

In Finland student tutoring is an essential part of beginning of academic studies. Student tutoring is the first contact to University when the new students start. Aims of the study were to get a better understanding of what are the key elements in student tutoring and what should and could be done to make it work even better.

Results are based on e-mail surveys of people responsible of tutoring from departments, N=8 and student organisations, N=11. Student tutors, N=93 filled a survey as an ending of tutoring and also new students, N=155 were asked feedback on tutoring. Data was analysed by qualitative methods mostly using data based content analysis.

The fundamental goals considered to be getting new students to get to know the physical and social environment of the Campus and University in general. Also peer support given by the tutor and the group was seen as a positive element of student tutoring. Student tutors also provide a hands-on knowledge about studies and studying, compared to the higher level information provided by the departments.

Based on the results student tutoring works well at the moment. To develop tutoring further questions like how well tutoring reached the new students and how versatile and deep the meetings were need to be answered. Based on the found results can be said that student tutoring has a significant role in beginning of the studies. New students said that student tutoring helped them to start their studies and find friends. In this light student tutoring can be seen as an important part of preventing retention.

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Session's theme: Students for students

Paper number: 31

Presenters: Pirre Seppänen,

Presenters' Organisation: The Student Union of the University of Helsinki

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Recommendations for good tutoring

Abstract:

The student organization of Theology presenting their best practices for tutoring and encouraging new students to become a part of the scientific community. In Finland student organizations are very strong and they play significant role in student's first year. The Student Union of the University of Helsinki agrees all these best practices and this organization and their faculty is also know of their excellent tutoring. We have also written materials.