

2012 UNIVERSITY ANNUAL LEARNING & TEACHING CONFERENCE

2012 & Beyond

Theme: Student Engagement

11:10 – 11:50

Peer Assisted Study Sessions: helping more students to develop their study skills

Robyn Adams, Study Advice Service

Abstract:

The Study Advice Service, as part of the Student Experience group within Library and Learning Innovation, is implementing [PASS \(Peer Assisted Study Sessions\)](#) - a discipline-based peer study support programme - in multiple departments at the University of Hull in 2012/13. PASS is voluntary for students and student leaders, and is usually attached to a challenging first year module. The leaders help first years work together by using 'PASS' facilitation strategies, giving ownership to students and creating independent learners. PASS has existed in the UK for 20 years and is supported by a [National Centre](#) at the University of Manchester.

Initially our motivations were (1) to help students develop transferable skills within their discipline to enhance grades, retention, progression and employability, and (2) to enhance the student experience by promoting socialisation and including students as partners in their learning. These motivations are shared by other UK institutions implementing PASS. However, another factor we have since considered is 'reaching' more students: certain students who need study skills support will never approach us for help. Our hope is that the discipline-specific nature of PASS, and the 'safe' environment of peer collaboration, will create a support mechanism that appeals to a wider group of students.

Since October 2010 we have worked with the Department of Sport, Health and Exercise Science to pilot PASS in 2011/12. The programme is now running smoothly with good feedback, and attendance patterns have provided interesting insights on the use of study skills support provided by the Study Advice Service.

Study Advice Service data from Weeks 3 to 6, 2011/12, suggests males are less likely to attend study skills appointments or workshops (attendance $43.3 \pm 19.1\%$ lower than expected, $p < 0.001$, Chi-square test). However, this finding was not mirrored by PASS in Sport, Health and Exercise Science, where male participation was proportionate for the student population in the department.

In conclusion, our initial findings suggest that PASS, which has been implemented to enhance grades, graduation rates and employability in several UK universities, may also 'reach' subsets of students who are under-represented in their use of study skills support services.