

Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Smailes, Joanne, Lejk, Emma, Beautyman, Wendy and Tudor, Jenna (2012) "Learning the ropes" through a new approach to mentoring. In: 9th ALDinHE Conference "Learning Development in a digital age", 2-4 April 2012, University of Leeds.

URL: <http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/leeds12.htm> <<http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/leeds12.htm>>

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/8434/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



UniversityLibrary

"Learning the ropes" through a new approach to mentoring

Joanne Smailes, Emma Lejk, Wendy Beautyman and Jenna Tudor, Northumbria University

Abstract

A student's sense of identification with their peers is important to their success (Haythornthwaite, 2008). Eggens, van der Werf & Bosker (2007) note that personal networks affect student attainment and Clifton *et al.*, (2004) observes how peers give an individual the sense of coping and hence perceived control over academic progress. Tinto (2009) highlights peer mentoring as a key way in which support, one of four factors for student success, can be effectively embedded.

Students make intensive use of social media and evidence suggests on-line networking now forms part of the 'social glue' which helps students settle into University life (Cheng & Vassileva, 2006; Madge *et al.*, 2009). In a recent UK report, Clark *et al.* (2010) found that over 80 UK institutions operate some form of peer mentoring. However, content analysis indicates that virtual based schemes are a rarity. Only nine institutions appeared to be using some form of virtual support, the majority of which supplemented face to face sessions by email contact. Therefore could an online model be more beneficial in a peer mentoring context?

This series of lightning talks will examine four different perspectives in relation to the introduction of peer mentoring in a virtual form. The individuals will succinctly link their experiences to the idiomatic expressions below and pose their own questions as the starting point for what is anticipated to be a lively discussion topic.

Talk 1: "As keen as mustard" by Emma Lejk, Programme Leader for BSc (Hons) Computer Science, Northumbria University, who will focus on experiences with a peer mentoring pilot scheme.

Talk 2: "You can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink" by Wendy Beautyman, Lecturer at Northumbria University and Peer Mentoring supervisor and trainer.

Talk 3: "A man's home is his castle" by Jenna Tudor, Lecturer in Mechanical Engineering and Product Design Technology focussing on student response to a virtual peer mentoring scheme

Talk 4: "Bridge the gap" by Joanne Smailes, Teacher Fellow and Programme Director for Staff and Student Enhancement, Newcastle Business School, Northumbria University who will outline student response to a virtual mentoring scheme.

References

- Cheng, C. & Vassileva, J. (2006) 'Design and evaluation of an adaptative mechanism for sustained educational online communities', *User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction*, 16, pp. 321-348.
- Clark, R., Andrews, J., & Ingelby, M. (2010). *Peer mentoring in the UK Higher Education Sector - Directory of Provision*. Birmingham: Aston University Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice.
- Clifton, R. A., Perry, R. P., Stubbs, C. A. & Roberts, L. W. (2004) 'Faculty environments, psychosocial dispositions and the academic achievement of college students. .', *Research in Higher Education*, 45 (8), pp. 801-828.

- Eggens, L., van der Werf, M. P. C. & Bosker, R. (2007) 'The influence of personal networks and social support on study attainment of students in university education.', *Higher Education*, 55 (5), pp. 553-573.
- Haythornthwaite, C. (2008) 'Learning relations and networks in web-based communities', *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, 4 (2), pp. 140-158.
- Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (2008) *Great Expectations of ICT, how Higher Education Institutions are measuring up*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/publications/greatexpectations.aspx> (Accessed: 27 November 2008).
- Kolek, E. A. & Saunders, D. (2008) 'Online disclosure: an empirical examination of undergraduate Facebook profiles', *NASPA Journal*, 45 (1), pp. 1-25.
- Lipka, S. (2007) 'For professors, 'friending' can be fraught', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54 (15), p. 1.
- Madge, C., Meek, J., Wellens, J. & Hooley, T. (2009) ' Facebook, social integration and informal learning at university: 'It is more for socialising and talking to friends about work than for actually doing work'. ', *Learning, Media and Technology*, 34 (2), pp. 141-155.
- Tinto, V. (2009) 'Keynote: Taking Student Retention Seriously: Rethinking the First Year of University', *ALTC FYE Curriculum Design Symposium*,. Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, 5 February 2009.

Presenters

Joanne Smailes, Teacher Fellow, Newcastle Business School.

Emma Lejk, School of Computing, Engineering and Information Sciences.

Wendy Beautyman, PAL facilitator, School of Computing, Engineering and Information Sciences.

Jenna Tudor, School of Computing, Engineering and Information Sciences.