



## **3<sup>rd</sup> International Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising Conference: Improving student success**

**21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009  
Holiday Inn, Lime Street, Liverpool, UK**

Hosted by the Widening Participation Research Centre, Edge Hill University, UK. Co-sponsored by the National Academic Advising Association (US) and the Higher Education Academy (UK)

### **Paper session 1: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 14.25 – 15.15**

#### **1a Using technology to enhance tutoring and advising**

i) The Wal-Mart Effect: Building a Virtual Tutoring. Carnelia Gipson, Centura College Online, Virginia, US

It's 1 o'clock in the morning; do you know where your students are? It might surprise you to know that many students are up sweating through course work! For many students, a sort of "Wal-Mart effect" exists—students are now living in a world of point and click convenience and desire academic support that matches their 24/7, one stop shop world. With the increasing demographic of non-traditional students juggling full time jobs and full time lives, the goal of convenient academic support is even more vital to student success. This presentation will provide step by step instructions for constructing an in-house virtual tutoring centre designed for student convenience. Additionally, participants will be offered detailed alternatives to the model presented that will allow an institution to individualize its virtual centre for its demographic needs.

ii) Pilot project to investigate and evaluate the use of video conference technology, to assist in supporting Physiotherapy students and educators whilst on clinical placement. Teri Taylor, University of Northumbria, England

This project aimed to investigate feasibility and logistics of using video conferencing as a medium for undertaking tri-partite, mid-placement meetings between Physiotherapy students, Clinical Educators and University tutor. As an alteration to existing face-to-face visits, this project also aimed to generate a template for future use. On evaluation 80 percent of educators involved expressed a preference for video conference over a face-to-face visit. Student evaluation expressed concerns over video conferencing for the failing student but enthusiasm for its use for progressive placements. Suggestions were made regarding alteration of materials to maximise development of the student via the altered communications medium.

#### **1b Approaches to improving student success**

i) Using Ecological Systems Theory to Understand Impediments to Undergraduate



### Student Success and Retention Feedback.

Cynthia Demetriou, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA.

An overview of key developmental aspects and mechanisms of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and preliminary ideas for utilizing the theory to understand impediments to student success are provided. Research reveals students who do not persist cite multiple interacting factors as the cause (Retention Study Group, 2004). Ecological Systems Theory focuses on multiple interacting factors across settings contributing to individual development. Applying this theory to undergraduate student success can explain how these factors interact to determine student success. Academic advising and successful retention efforts are inseparable (Nut, 2007); (Wes, 1981). The role of the academic advisor in the university's ecological system is examined. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's university-wide Retention Study and academic intervention programs are discussed.

### ii) Dispositions to Study: Engaging With An Ingredient of Student Success. Jamie Harding, Northumbria University, England.

Data collected from a cohort of social science students at Northumbria University demonstrated that there were some motivations for, and attitudes to, studying that were linked to academic success and student satisfaction. The findings raise the question of how best to support students with potentially problematic approaches to learning. One mechanism that is likely to illuminate this question is the Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI). This tool, developed at the Graduate School of Education at Bristol University and already piloted by a number of higher education institutions, is now being used to encourage students to consider their own dispositions to learn – including their motivation and attitudes – and to generate discussions with staff about how best to improve student success.

## 1c The role of personal tutoring in supporting student success

### i) Improving Student Success - the role of Personal Tutoring. Natalie Hughes, University of Wales Institute Cardiff, Wales

This paper looks at the role of personal tutoring within the Cardiff School of Management in the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, and how since its development in September 2007, it has worked towards enhancing the HE experience for students in that academic school. The paper will consider how the personal tutoring role places the student and their individual needs at the centre of the experience, concentrating on addressing barriers to learning and strengthening skills needed to achieve academic success. Finally, the paper suggests that future plans for the Personal Tutoring Unit will concentrate on fostering the successful relationship developed with CSM students, proactively meeting the diverse needs of our students and enhancing our strong connection with academic staff and colleagues across UWIC.

### ii) Tutoring, Advising and Coaching : One for all or all for one? Ollie Jones, Leeds Metropolitan University, England.

Tutoring, Advising and Coaching : One for all or all for one? Four years ago the faculty of Business and Law at Leeds Metropolitan University implemented a Personal tutor system, across the whole faculty, to address student welfare, performance and ultimately retention. However these issues were most acute in the BA Business Studies programmes, which now have over 500 students enrolled in each level. This paper reviews the how the faculty



adopted different advising strategies, and approaches for each level, how these have adapted and changed over time, and the operational lessons that have been learnt, especially in the light of the current integration with Personal Development Modules and requirements (PDP). In addition the paper takes a critical view of the future of Personal tutoring at especially at levels 2 and 3.

### **1d Examining and responding to key factors impacting on early withdrawal**

#### **i) Examining the effect of late entry on student success. Vic Boyd and Stephanie McKendry, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland**

Joining a degree programme through a late entry route has the potential to impact significantly on the student experience. Students may miss key pre-entry information and academic guidance. There has been some suggestion that late entry has a detrimental impact on students' ability to meet the challenges of higher education (Baxter & Hatt, 2000; Yates & James, 2006, 2007). An action research project in a Post-92 Scottish University aims to determine the levels of academic preparedness amongst 'late entry' students and examine the effect, if any, that late entry has on social integration. The research will also identify any withdrawal or progression trends in comparison to the general student population. The project team will then develop an effective model of student support for this group.

#### **ii) The impact of extra support and new teaching methods on students' attitudes and performance in Mathematics. Ciarán Mac an Bhaird, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Ireland**

Mathematics Support Centres provide a relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere where students are welcomed and they consider it a valuable centre where they can ask questions that they would normally be too afraid to ask. We will present evidence that this support increases students' confidence in their mathematical abilities and that it increases their grades. We will also discuss how introducing the students to new innovative methods of teaching increases their participation in class, their understanding of the material and their attitude towards the subject. The efforts of the staff of the Mathematics Support Centre in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, has led to it being one of the busiest centres in the UK or Ireland

### **1e Creating a Professional Development Program for Personal Tutoring Workshop by Charlie Nutt, Executive Director of NACADA and Dr Jayne Drake, Temple University and incoming NACADA President, USA.**

Personal tutors have the desire to provide the highest quality support to their students as possible but often have not been given the tools, strategies, and/or information they need to do so. This workshop will outline the steps for creating and implementing effective professional development programs for personal tutoring. The presenters will provide key elements that all personal tutors need to be made aware of as well as steps in how to coordinate a comprehensive program. In addition, presenters will share with the participants the NACADA resources they can utilize in their professional development programs.