The role of the peer

N M Speirs
The role of the peer

_I wandered lonely as a cloud............._
The role of the peer

*I wandered lonely as a cloud............

‘How can you do physics and poetry at the same time? The aim of science is to make difficult things understandable in a simple way; the aim of poetry is to state simple things in an incomprehensible way. The two are incompatible.’

*Paul Dirac addressing Robert Oppenheimer*

The role of the peer

A growing body of evidence supports the idea that peer support can act to

* increase persistence rates among students.
* increase learning gains.
* the achievement level of peers has a positive effect on achievement.
* support the transition from school/college to university.
* aid the social and intellectual integration of new undergraduates.


The role of the peer

I think the project is a great idea and I feel it helps people to make the transition successfully from school to university. I benefited from having a peer mentor and have really enjoyed being a mentor myself.

I have gained confidence, become more independent and responsible. I have found it easy to get on with people. Mentoring has helped me with this in getting on with it and taking chances.

I now have a better self image and don’t fear people as much

I now worry less about those little things. I suppose I’m just happier.

Thank you for supporting us through first months of university life!!!

Your exam strategy session was the best! Thank you!
The role of the peer

Within a classical peer mentoring programme there is a secondary outcome, the development of the peer.
The role of the peer

* Formalising this development of the peer though the Edinburgh Award
* Understanding issues surrounding employability
* The difference between subject specific knowledge and graduate attributes
The role of the peer

* What is PAL?

* The origins of PAL in the UK are rooted in secondary education, where senior school pupils worked with their junior peers. A comprehensive model.

* In the USA however, PAL is often known as PASS, or peer assisted study sessions. The aim of PASS were to address areas of academic difficulties in particular degree programmes. As such it was often termed supplementary instruction, SI.

* Inconsistent nomenclature; mentoring, peer assisted learning, peer assisted study sessions etc.

* Topping defines PAL as the acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting amongst status equal or matched companions.

The role of the peer

* A PALs has the option to focus on either the acquisition of knowledge or the development of skills/attributes as its priority.

* Given facilitators do not teach, only 3 of the following are relevant;

  knowledge – what I know

  skills/attributes – what I can do

  motivation – how much I want to be able to know and do

  confidence – my belief that I am able to know and do
The role of the peer

And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

*William Wordsworth*
Peer assisted learning

Mariam Stepanyan
4th year Psychology UG
Peer assisted learning

How to get started

> Named member of staff
> Selection of facilitators
> Team of senior students
> First meeting early May
> First training early September
Peer assisted learning

*Between May and September*

- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Who?
- How?
Peer assisted learning

Session Content

Week 2 - Lecture skills

Week 4 - Tutorial/small group skills

Week 6 - Research skills

Week 8 - Essay writing skills

Week 10 - Critical thinking skills

Week 12 - Exam skills
Peer assisted learning

*Marketing – target audience*

- Emails
- Bulletin Boards
- Posters
- Lecture shout outs
- Handbook