Peer Support Workshops:
Fast Track (partnership model)
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Session One – Fast Track: Peer led study skills for new students
Designed as a ‘safety net’ for new undergraduates
Evening sessions take place
Run by peers
Peers do not ‘teach’, they ‘facilitate’.
Initially, new undergraduate students did not come to the sessions, so these sessions were opened up to all taught students at the institution. This yielded an eventual attendance of 15 people. The workshop took the form of a demonstration, with attendees asked to assume the role of students. The chance to relive past glories or create alternate versions of their past selves. Each were given a card with a ‘student worry’ on it, eg ‘Each time I sit down to revise I always become distracted’ or ‘Each time I revise I cannot retain any information’. They were asked to tell the rest of their group what their problem was and then propose a solution to their problem. The ‘best’ piece of advice from each table was then shared with the floor.
A3 sheets were then handed out and the groups noted good and bad study techniques on the sheets, then each table rotated and looked at each others ideas.
After this demonstration, the session changed to a Q+A, with attendees given the chance to address how they felt the session went.

“Do students think they already know their best suited method of revision because the vast majority of new undergraduates have just finished high school” – This scheme can open up students to new ideas/techniques through knowledge exchange.
Could this approach be adopted in tutorials? It is slightly less informal and as thus potentially beneficial.
Selling ‘generic’ study skills can sometimes be difficult. Students have a want for tailored study skills to their specific area of study. Subject contextualized sessions are always desirable. These sessions tend to take place after weeks 4/5 of the semester, as most students by then have had a ‘wake up call’ that perhaps they are not as well adapted to higher education as they believe themselves to be (through a bad mark/feedback/panic setting in etc).
Could we have literature on these type of services to offer to prospective/students who have accepted their offer to the institution? More often than not, new students will be too overwhelmed with their new environment, new city and exciting opportunities. It was wondered whether there would be benefit in providing this literature for parents, who could disseminate this knowledge to their child in an informal basis.

Workshop 2: Fast Track: peer-led study skills for new students (11:40)

- IAD run induction for new students – safety net, to facilitate discussion
- PALS off the shelf materials that can be tailored to different disciplines
- Attendance: opened up to 2nd and subsequent years and PG – suggested that varying timing and location of sessions could increase attendance and engagement.
- Flagging sessions as learning skills related to study environment; subject specific guidance/differing students’ needs
- Enhancement to study skills rather than remedial; balance of academic/peer support empowering students