

“WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?”

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES
AND BENEFITS OF BEING A PASS LEADER
SUPPORTING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS.**

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WHAT IS PASS?

Peer Assisted Study Sessions

- ✘ PASS is a student-led initiative where issues relating to course material and student life can be discussed in a friendly, informal environment with peers and trained student facilitators.
- ✘ PASS provides an opportunity to make new friends to study within small group sessions with approximately 10-15 students and 2 student leaders. It's a safe place to ask questions and improve your confidence in your studies.
- ✘ PASS runs in 29 countries and more than 1500 institutions worldwide; in other universities regular attendees of PASS have shown better knowledge and understanding of course material and have improved their grades by 10 - 20%.

THE ROLE OF THE PASS LEADER

- ✘ **Training:** Attend 4 x half day training sessions
- ✘ **Level of commitment:** Run weekly or fortnightly PASS session (1 hour); attend debrief sessions
- ✘ **Action in sessions:** In teams of 2 leaders, facilitate discussions; be supportive of students' problems; signpost students to relevant help; record attendance for evaluation work; give students confidence to ask questions at PASS sessions and in lectures
- ✘ **Action out of sessions:** email and/or Facebook message PASS group to remind students of session time/ location; ask students if there are specifics they'd like to cover; suggest topics of discussion that caused problems last year; keep in contact with your PASS leader partner
- ✘ **What you WON'T do:** give any answers to academic questions or coursework; take the place of a lecturer

WHY FOCUS ON LEADERS, NOT PARTICIPANTS?

- ✘ Most PASS research already focuses on the benefits to the participants;
- ✘ As the PASS Supervisor, my contact is with the leaders rather than the participants;
- ✘ Interest in peer mentoring, group leadership and empowerment of young people from my Youth Work background.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS...

✘ There is very little research on benefits for leaders, but what is out there says...

“leaders can change their view on **social learning** as opposed to individualistic approach”

“**communication, interpersonal, and leadership**”

“**empathy, reflection, and self efficacy**”

“appreciation of **diversity, learning styles**”

“**relationships** with faculty and cohort groups”

“improved **subject knowledge, employability**”

METHODOLOGY

- ✘ PASS leader evaluation forms (response rate 84%, 27 out of 32);
- ✘ De-brief meeting - BA Education(7 participants);
- ✘ Focus group - BA Primary (7 participants) - semi-structured, open-ended questions.

- ✘ PASS attendee/non-attendee evaluation forms (240 sent out. 50% return rate.)

KEY BENEFITS TO LEADERS...

- ✘ More confident at standing in front of peers
- ✘ Practice in planning sessions (ready for placement);
- ✘ More confident in being resourceful and flexible/think on my feet when it comes to planning and delivering sessions;
- ✘ More reflective of my practice, resources and activities in order to evaluate what was effective;
- ✘ Patience;
- ✘ Organisation skills;
- ✘ Being able to motivate first year students;
- ✘ More confident about putting forward my understanding of educational issues, and in facilitating others to further their own understanding of the issues through resource suggestions, talking about study skills ideas, and promoting discussion around topics ;
- ✘ Developed communication skills;
- ✘ Time management;
- ✘ Should help employability.

KEY CHALLENGES TO LEADERS

- ✘ Poor attendance;
- ✘ Timetable issues;
- ✘ Not being able to answer some questions;
- ✘ Over domination by one or two in the group;
- ✘ Issues with co-leader;
- ✘ Students not being proactive in suggesting content.
- ✘ Not enough contact with module tutors

PROGRESSION FOR LEADERS.

- ✘ Continue as PASS leader – senior leader;
- ✘ Be involved in PASS leader training;
- ✘ Help conduct leader observations and de-brief sessions;
- ✘ Help PASS supervisor to run PASS.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE...

- ✘ Make first 2 sessions compulsory;
- ✘ Senior leaders to help with observations, training and de-brief sessions;
- ✘ Merge groups if attendance falls;
- ✘ Refer to 'introductory activities' not 'ice-breakers!'
- ✘ More contact with module tutors;
- ✘ Leaders to be involved in Induction week activities, and meet their groups.

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