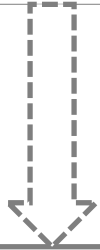
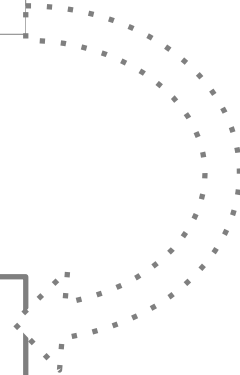


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the value of mentors and mentees in year zero, art & design



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Art and Design practice has a long and rich history in Belfast, being established in 1849. Since then the provision has grown and thrived and today is one of the leading providers of Art and Design education in the UK and the largest on the island of Ireland. Providing a centre of excellence in Art and Design education and a location for innovation, creativity and energy in a world leading University environment.





- Social integration and social support are closely linked and are vital to the University experience
- Successful integration in both social and academic areas reduces the likelihood of student withdrawal (Tinto, 1995)



A formalised approach to **social interaction** may be required

- Icebreakers, peer support groups, extended induction, field trips, peer mentors

context



Aims of the peer mentor program:

- To provide non-academic support to all students in Year Zero cohort
- Contrast to other mentor programs which target 'at risk' or struggling students
- No student can be seen as being 'singled-out'
- All students assigned a mentor

Aims of the peer mentor program:

- Focus on the social rather than academic mentoring
- Positive social interaction
- Orientate new students
- Encourage mentors in their own development



Aims of the peer mentor program:

- Positive impact on retention
- Aid transition into university
- Aid students, both mentors and mentees, gain confidence
- Aid student engagement with the University

mentoring can be seen as:

“A confidential, one-to-one relationship in which an individual uses a more experienced, usually more senior person as a sounding board and for guidance. It is a protected, non-judgemental relationship...”

The Industrial Society (1995)

Selection of mentors:

- Mentors recruited from the previous year's cohort
- Students were required to apply for the role through a written statement outlining their suitability for the role
- 1 mentor: 10 mentees

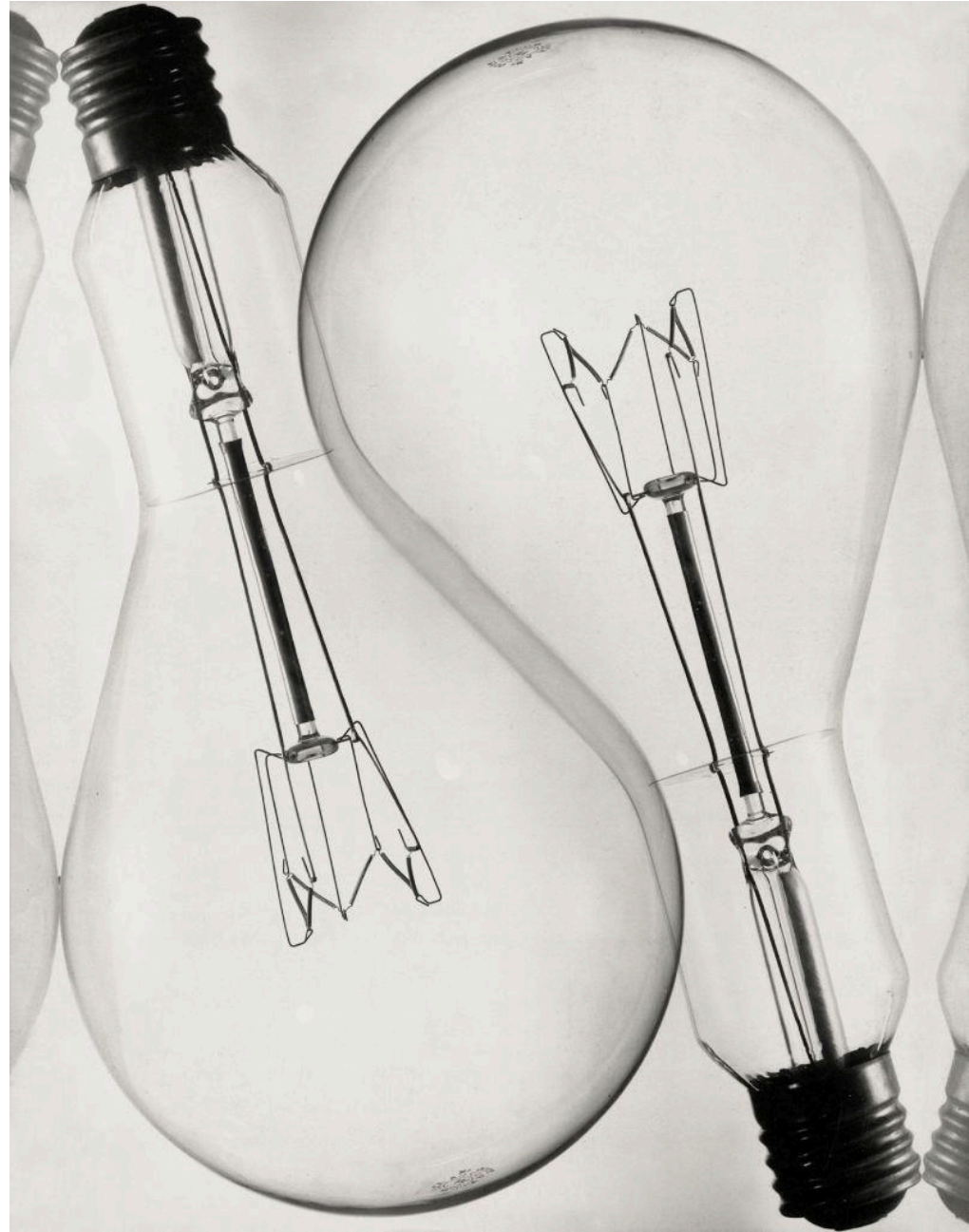


Training:

- Full training provided
- Included workshops from:
 - Student Support
 - Student Union
- Practical sessions on expectations of the role & what the role did not involve
- Training took place in late August
- Revised for subsequent mentor program

Expectations of the mentor:

- Minimum requirement of 1 hour per week
- Program for semester 1 only
- Face to face meeting at beginning and mid semester
- **Contact with mentee via weekly emails**



Expectations of the mentor:

- Support for mentors provided by member of staff
- Regular contact from staff to chart progress and deal with issues as they arose
- Role is **not** one of counsellor or tutor

Expectations of the mentee:

- Automatically assigned a mentor
- First contact prior to enrolment
- Weekly email from mentor
- Not obliged to meet
- Not obliged to respond to emails



- Aim to aid adjustment to university life
- Opportunity to meet with other mentees in group
- Experience of student who has 'been through it'
- Knowledge that 'someone is there'



Feedback from pilot

Mentors:

- Positive experience
- Gained confidence in their ability to communicate and deal with issues
- ‘Met new people, made new friends’
- Greater knowledge of the University and ‘how it worked’
- Some mentors wished to continue role in following year

Mentors:

- Minority of mentors did not fulfill the required commitment
- Difficult to achieve gender balance in mentors/ mentees



Feedback from pilot

Mentees

- Positive experience
- Met other students, made new friends
- Found some aspects of course difficult, but helped to discuss experience with mentor
- Some mentees fully embraced email contact and met with mentors
- Mentors were able to discuss undergraduate courses with mentees, give tours, introduce them to studios and workshops

- Range of experience for mentees
- May not have received regular contact

Peer mentor program: year 2

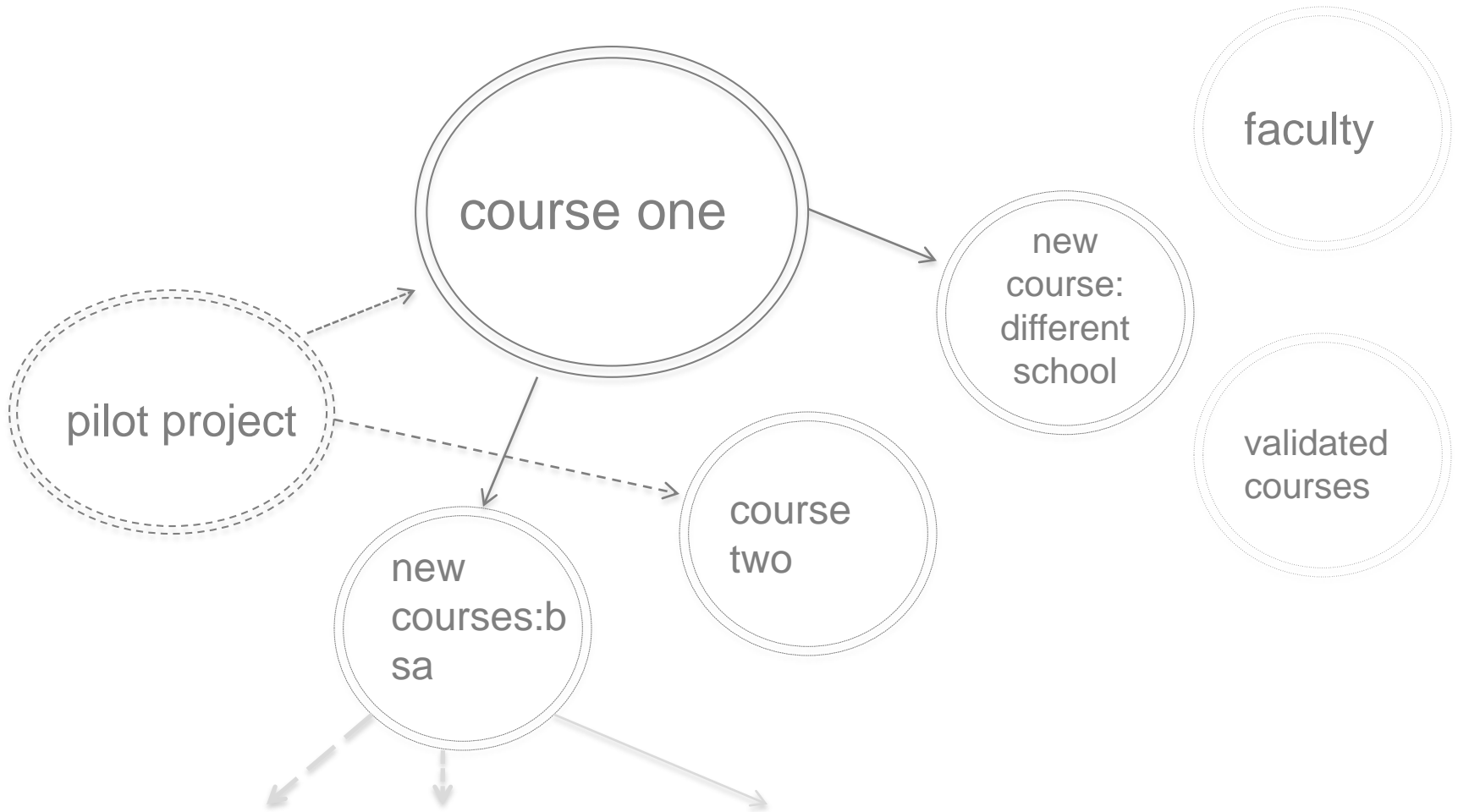
- Academic year 2011/12
- Mentors recruited in previous academic year
- Training provided in March and August 2011
- Mentees contacted prior to induction/ week one
- Aim to improve enrolment conversion
- 'Part of the University' before entering the campus

Impact on retention:

- Difficult to define impact
- Course attrition below Faculty target
 - 2008/09 : 12.5%
 - 2010/11: 8.2%
 - 2011/12 : 10.1%



peer mentoring potential



conclude:

- Extra workload for member of staff
- Selection of mentors crucial to impact
- Positive experience for mentors/ mentees
- Formalised support for student experience

conclude:

- Confidence building
- Aid transition
- Increased knowledge of, and 'belonging' to the University
- Positive impact on retention

- When such practices are introduced in the initial stages of a course, students are more likely to settle down, be satisfied with their experience, and benefit socially and academically.

They will also feel less isolated, and less likely to withdraw. (Bingham, Daniels, 1998)

