



Online Peer Support Options - What can be done to support online students?

Key Words

online cloud peer support students helping students learning

Abstract

Online Peer Support Options - What can be done to support online students? Deakin University has committed significant energy to providing an environment which fosters a high level of overall student satisfaction. Social and academic engagement are two variables that have been shown to influence student satisfaction and retention. (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011). As a Cloud Campus based (online) student these factors are even more relevant as Cloud/online students often identify as isolated due to their lack of physical interaction. With the growing use of Cloud campus a need to diversify the models of academic support including peer support has emerged. Prebble et al. (2004) emphasised the need both for support systems that help students to integrate into an institution and for the institution to adapt to meet the needs of diverse students. A variety of approaches have been taken across institutions (reviewed in Huang, Cortese & Pepper, 2015). This panel workshop will encourage discussion on how programs have been adopted and changed to meet the needs of a more diverse learning community through an introduction to the variety of programs available to support cloud based students. By the end of the panel forum it is expected that participants will be aware of different initiatives trialled and developed to address student needs that still hold true to the practice / pedagogy including the Deakin Students Helping Students Best Practice Principles that has underpin peer support at Deakin University. Participants will be encouraged to share what they do at their institutions. A panel of Staff and students will outline the variety of programs at Deakin University including: CloudPASS – a variant of the situated PASS program that uses both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for students to connect. Writing Mentors who use a drop in model of support for students both situated and online Maths Mentors who use a Study Hall/drop in approach to support students with situated and online problem solving Success Coaches using an asynchronous approach to connecting to all first time online students and supporting them with regular, planned contact over their first trimester. These programs are underpinned by the Deakin Students Helping Students Best Practice Principles.

References

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