

Online Learning Strategies to Recruit and Train Student Mentors

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Session overview

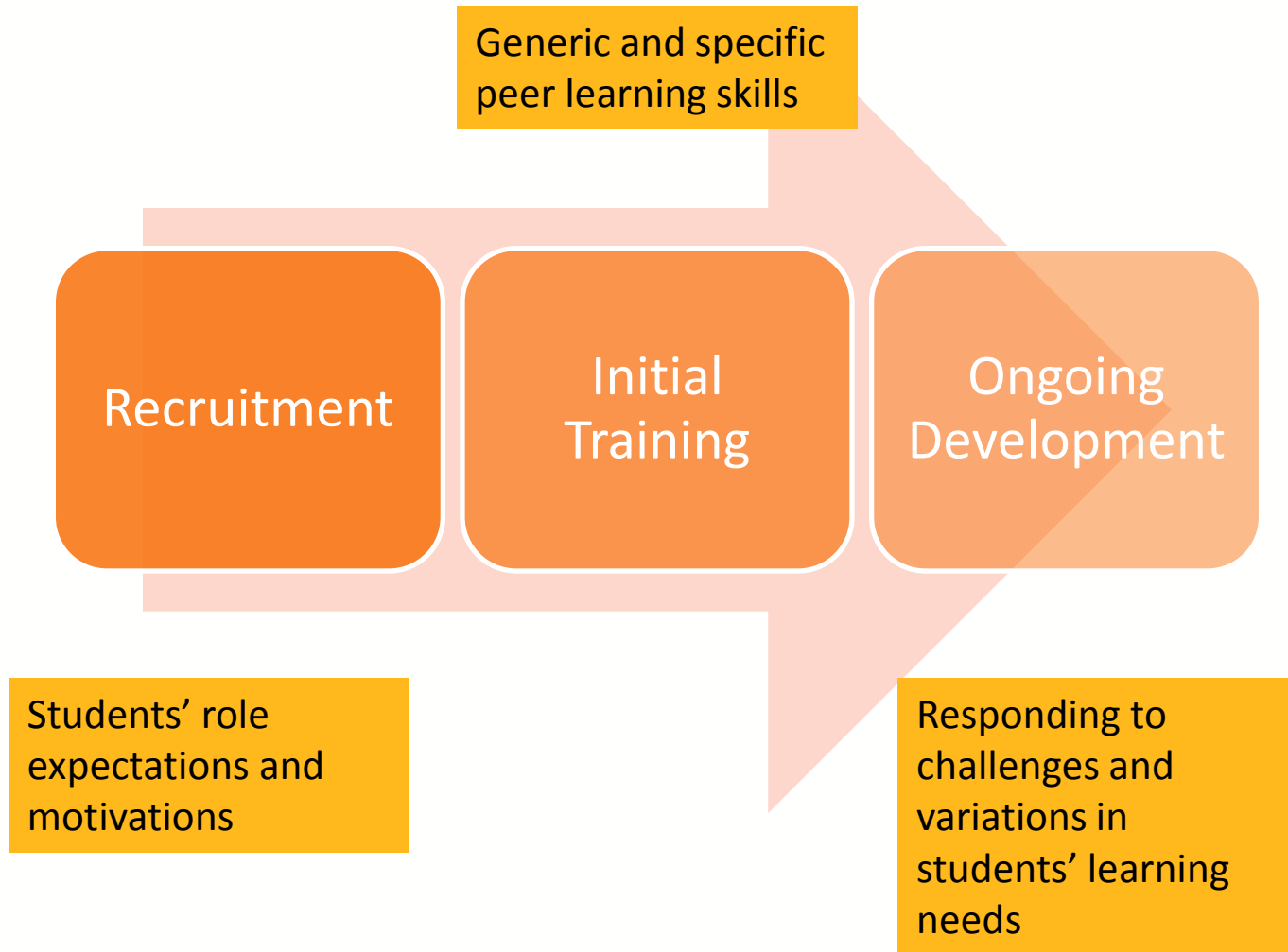


- Recruitment, training and ongoing development in peer assisted learning programs
- Student mentoring programs at VU
- Online recruitment strategies: motivations and expectations
- Initial training: flipped classroom
- Ongoing development: blended approach
- Recommendations and conclusions



RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND ONGOING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN PEER ASSISTED LEARNING

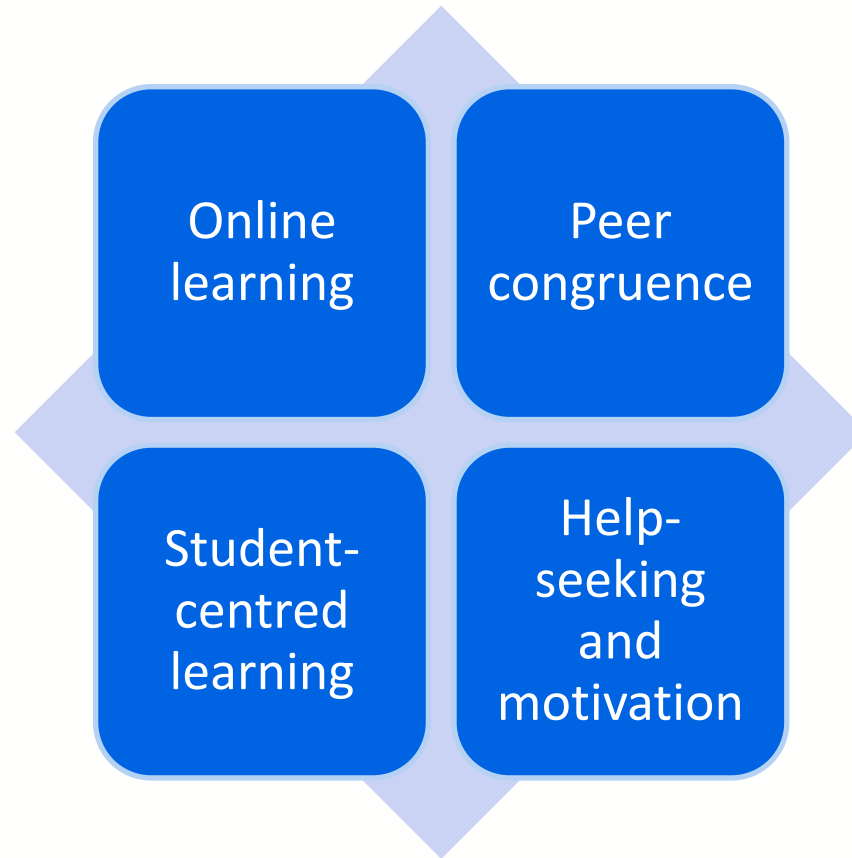




Online recruitment and training strategies

- Overcome time and geographical barriers
- Multi-campus programs
- Flexibility and cost effectiveness
- Skill transferability and ongoing development
- Opportunities for reflection
- Develop online learning skills

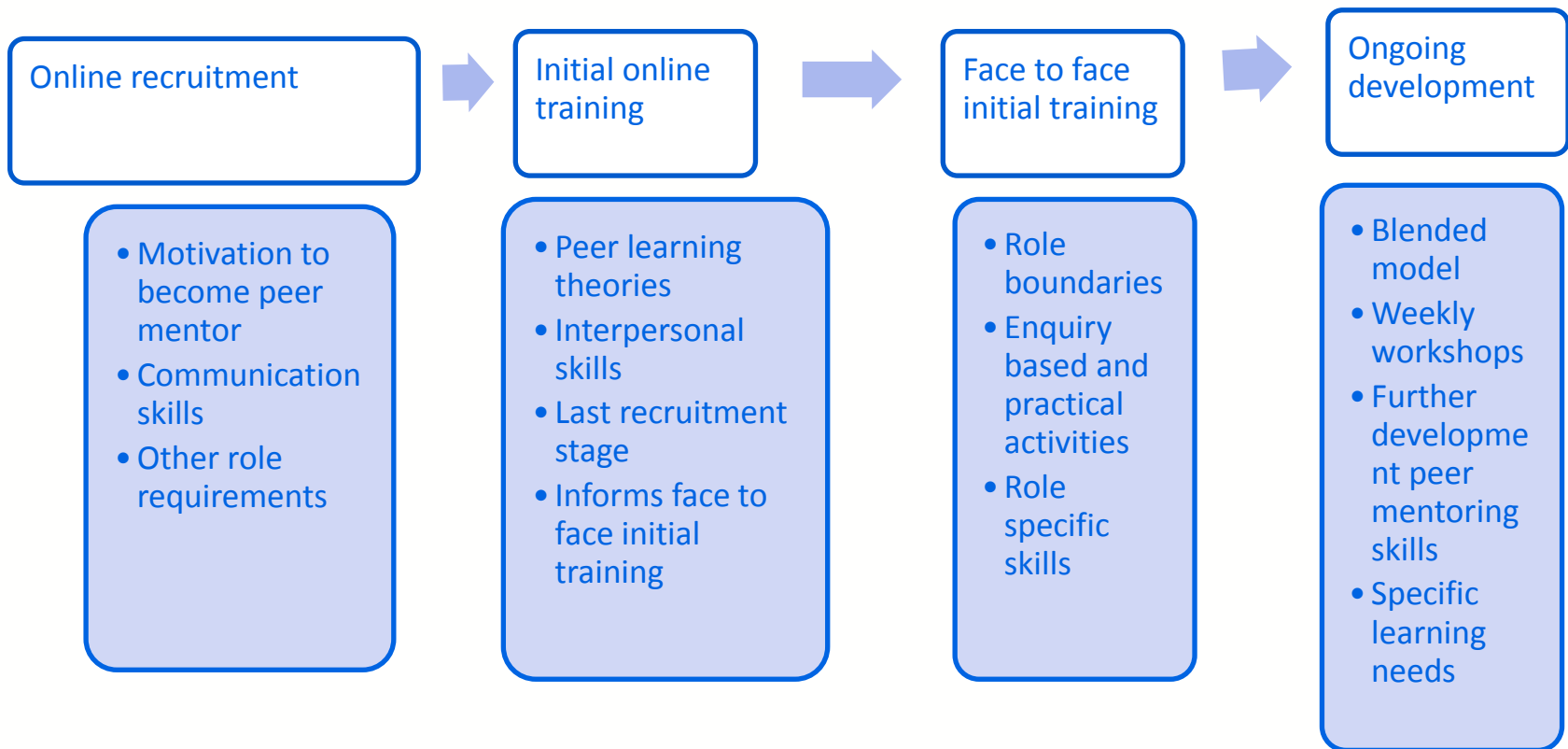
Theoretical underpinnings



Student Mentoring programs at Victoria University

- Academic skills and subject specific programs
- Connecting embedded and stand-alone programs
- Five campuses
- Between 40-50 Student Mentors each semester





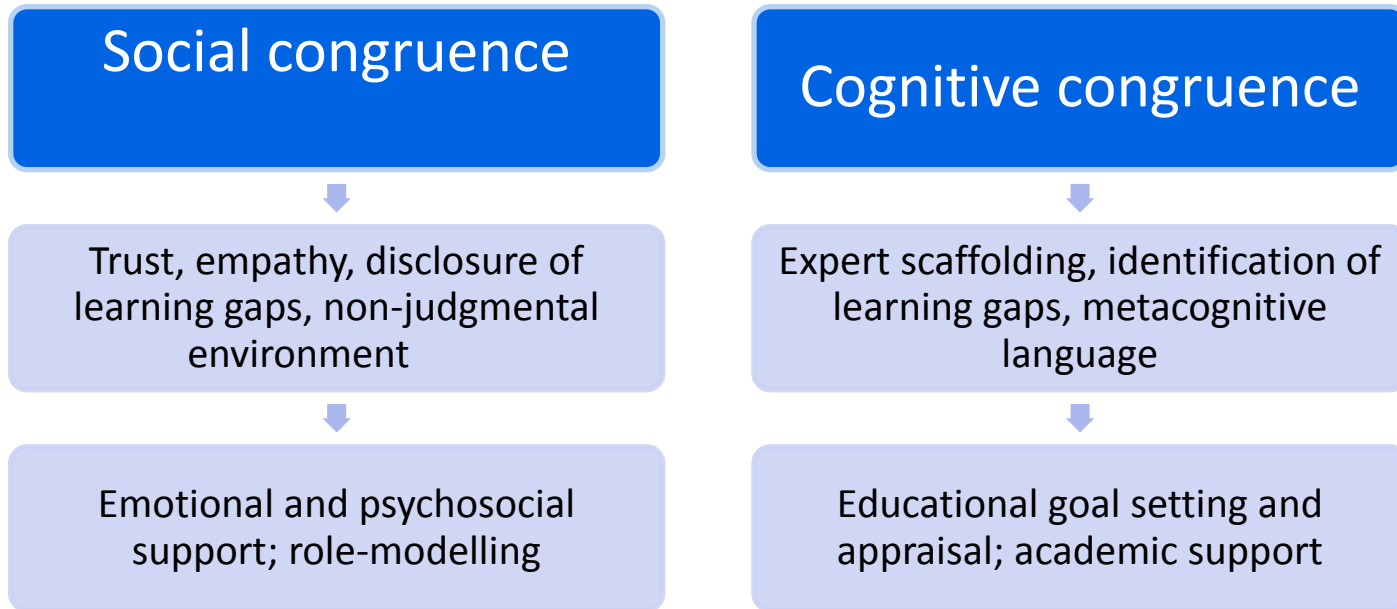
Online recruitment strategies

- Assessing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations
- Students' role expectations and attitudes towards peer learning
- Previous experiences in peer learning
- Peer learning affective dimensions

Task description	Peer learning aspect	Connection to training and ongoing development
Watch videos on peer learning programs	Set up initial expectations and understandings	Informs training on Student Mentors' motivations and expectations
Reflect on first year students' learning needs	Students' ability to establish peer learning relationships	Expanded in later training
Describe understandings on peer learning	Students' role expectations	Expanded in later training
Upload video	Intrinsic/extrinsic motivations; help-seeking; communication skills; metacognitive awareness	Informs further training/developed in later training

Initial training content

- Pedagogical principles of peer learning
- Peer learning relationships
- Social congruence
- Cognitive congruence
- Clear role expectations and role boundaries
- Enhancing independent learning skills and self-regulation in students



Garcia-Melgar, A., East, J., & Meyers, N. (2015). Hiding in plain sight: The 'relationship' in peer assisted learning in Higher Education. *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, Special Edition Academic Peer Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/>

Initial training: flipped classroom

- Generic online training module and program specific face to face training days
- Constructivist approach
- Online training module: scaffolded initial peer learning skills
- Data from online training module informed face to face training activities
- Enquiry-based activities in face to face

Content area	Peer learning component	Activity example
Facilitating knowledge	Cognitive congruence	Watch video and relate to example of uses of the zone of proximal development in previous learning experiences
Building relationships	Peer mentoring relationships	Written responses to peer learning scenarios
Communication skills	Social congruence	Complete online quiz on uses of questioning techniques
Practices of empowerment	Pedagogical principles	Read journal article and reflect on the role of peer learning programs in higher education

Ongoing learning and development

- Developmental nature of peer mentoring role
- Role boundaries may need to be redefined
- Students' help-seeking goals can affect peer learning dynamics
- External factors can also affect peer interactions in peer learning programs (e.g. assessment tasks)

Ongoing development: a blended approach

- Generic and program specific skills and knowledge
- Constructive alignment
- Assessing suitability for online and/or face to face delivery
- Learning assessment through enquiry-based activities
- Use of forums, online activities and multimedia

Ongoing development of peer learning skills

Checking for understanding, questioning techniques, role boundaries

Cognitive
-Shared
learning
guidance

Metacognitive

Learning theories, peer learning theories, role-modelling study and learning skills

Affective

Motivation theories, attitudes towards learning, socio-psychological elements

Adapted from Ten Cate, O., Snell, L., Mann, K., & Vermunt, J. (2004). Orienting teaching toward the learning process. *Academic medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 79(3), 219-228.

Content area	Peer learning component	Online activity example
Interpersonal and communication skills	Social congruence	Students complete interactive module on communication skills based on person-centred approach, then upload video role-playing these skills
Learning theories	Cognitive congruence	Students assess own learning style using multi-response quiz
Help-seeking behaviours	Motivation to participate in PAL	In groups develop strategies to encourage help-seeking in specific student cohorts
Metacognitive awareness	Role-modelling	Students complete an online module on motivation to learn, and attributional styles and beliefs. Students then use discussion forums to report on motivation factors and styles observed when interacting with students

Challenges

- Peer mentors' engagement in online activities
- Tracking completion of online development workshops
- Limited use of discussion forums
- Team building exercises
- Digital literacy skills

Recommendations and conclusions

- Assess students' motivations as part of online recruitment process
- Online initial training can be used to develop initial understandings of peer learning; more practice time during face to face training
- Adapt content of development workshops to address students' learning needs over the semester
- Online development workshops provided more flexibility at the end of the semester