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## First year personal tutoring and key skills development

Learning & Teaching Exhibition 2011



### Outline

- Personal tutoring (PT) guidelines and my initial personal experience
- Idea and motivation
- Targeted skills and materials used
- Anecdotal student feedback/'evaluation'



### Personal tutoring in Bristol

"The University is committed to providing effective personal tutoring for all students on taught programmes. It has [Regulations for Personal Tutors \[pdf\]](#) and [Guidelines for Personal Tutoring \[pdf\]](#). Together these provide regulations, advice and support for departments, personal tutors and students about how to make personal tutoring work for all involved and are intended to promote consistency in personal tutoring across the University."

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/pt/>



### Initial personal experience and generic student feedback

- Wide variation in student experience reported
- Students unsure about what to expect of my tutorials
- Difficult to develop conversation at times
- Feeling of wasting my and their time



### Motivation

- All of the previous!
- Diversity of below-HE learning background and its consequences on students
- Many difficulties in study related to key, transferable or academic skills
  - which then develop to issues of pastoral nature, e.g. confidence, inter-personal skills
- Increasing need for support of overseas students
  - cultural shock may affect their academic ability, different cultures of learning at HE level etc.



### Idea and initial effort

- Provide some structure in my PT sessions to facilitate the development of key skills
- Background work
  - Surveyed personal tutoring guidelines across EngF departments
  - Discussed with colleagues
  - Looked at models of academic support across the sector
- Developed a (semi) structured approach (see handout)



### Skills covered

- Reading scientific and technical literature
- Finding information and assessing relevance (including a discussion on Wikipedia :))
- Writing and referencing, citation styles, plagiarism
- Doing presentations
- Creating posters
- Professional ethics case study
- Revision tips and a... pub visit at the end



### Other areas facilitated as a consequence of a semi-structured PT experience

- Awareness through discussion on learning styles and special needs (e.g. dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome)
- Some content-related aspects, to the extent I can help (e.g. first year maths, programming)
- Sharing learning tips between them
- CV preparation and interviewing skills
- Increased their trust to add me on Facebook :)



### Relevant effort

- Half of the timetabled tutorials
  - other half allocated to open discussion or individual meetings
- Collection of existing materials
  - no first hand resources developed
- Reference handout
- Timetable an appropriate classroom or meeting room for presentations session
- A round of pints (where appropriate)

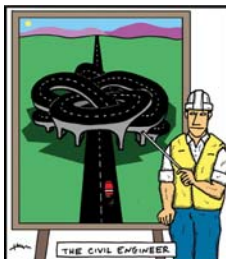


### 'Evaluation'

- Improved student experience from my original ad hoc approach
- Engaged most students (one out of each dozen of tutees didn't)
- Second years found resources useful 'on-goingly'
- Also provided feedback and ideas for other topics and learning activities
- I enjoy it more!



### Anecdotal evidence



"Basically, I think the way we went about our tutor group this year was brilliant. I can only speak for myself but I am sure the others agree that we felt we could come to you with our problems. You gave us useful tips and general knowledge on things like research & general engineering problems.

People on our course were mostly jealous when they heard about our tutor group, as we seemed to be the most active by a distance."



### Thank you for listening

Happy to answer any questions!

