

MEMORANDUM

To: Nicola Rolls Common Units Management

FROM: Kerin Bolton Lecturer, TEP
Sharon Bridgeman Project Manager/Quality Officer
School of Academic Language and Learning

DATE: 28 February 2011

SUBJECT: Proposal for action research project: online peer support to external students:
CUC100 cohort.

Project title

Action research project: provision of online support to external students CUC100 cohort.

Project overview

The provision of online support predominantly for self identified “at risk” external students enrolled and participating in CUC100, Academic Literacies in Semester 1, 2011.

Aim

To determine whether external students who self identify as being at risk of failure in the tertiary context benefit from participation in an online peer supported study group.

Method

- Students will be invited to participate in an online peer supported study group after self identifying via a voluntary evaluative questionnaire (copy below)
- 15-20 students who show interest will participate in online, synchronous, bi weekly Wimba sessions throughout Semester 1, 2011.
- Participants will be interviewed at the end of semester.

Participants

No more than 20 students who, via a voluntary evaluative questionnaire, identify as feeling under-confident in ‘being a university student’ and, therefore, are assumed to be more likely to withdraw from their studies will be invited to participate.

Two members of staff from the School of Academic Language and Learning with experience in teaching CUC100 (but who are not currently teaching in the unit) will facilitate the online group sessions and final interviews with those willing to attend and who perceive the need for extra support.

Timing

Sessions will be held at a specific time and day on a fortnightly basis, throughout the semester.

Ethical considerations

Participation in the questionnaire, online discussions and final interview will be entirely voluntary and all of the information collected will be confidential. Students’ names will not be recorded or listed nor will our final publication make any attributions for quotes to any one individual. Sessions will be recorded only if there is no objection from students.

Cont/...

Presentation of results

The results from the questionnaire and quotes from study group discussions and interviews are likely to be presented in published work.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or if additional information about the project is required.

Voluntary Self Evaluative Questionnaire

1. Do you know someone who is studying/has studied at university? Y/N
2. Have you participated in post-secondary, tertiary or formal study since leaving school? Y/N
3. How long has it been since you participated in formal study (school)?
1-3 years
4-7 years
over 7 years

| | 1. Strongly Agree | 2. Agree | 3. Slightly agree | 4. Slightly Disagree | 5 Disagree | 6. Strongly Disagree |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 4. I feel confident in managing my time so that I can meet the demands of study and other life commitments | | | | | | |
| 5. I am able to commit to at least 10 hours of study per week, per unit | | | | | | |
| 6. I have/will be able to create a personal study space for use throughout the semester | | | | | | |
| 7. I feel confident that I can talk to other students in my course on campus/through online discussions/ via email/phone if I have questions about my coursework or study. | | | | | | |
| 8. I feel that I have adequate support away from the university | | | | | | |
| 9. I feel comfortable contacting my tutors/lecturers if I have a question/s about my unit or an assignment | | | | | | |
| 10. I believe my studies at university are a high priority | | | | | | |
| 11. I feel confident that I can draw on my determination (inner strength) to continue with my studies if I experience difficulties. | | | | | | |
| 12. Finally, is there one main thing that you think could make it difficult for you to complete your studies? If there is, and you feel comfortable doing so, describe it here: | | | | | | |