

Title of presentation

Empowering international foundation students to help themselves - The Peer Tutoring Project

Presenters

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Abstract

The Peer Tutoring Project is one utilized to allow our international students to achieve their full potential in their Mathematics Studies. The premise is simple. In classes with over 40 students it is inevitable to have a proportion of the class that are incredible strong in the material being delivered and another which are very weak. Therefore we have put together a formal system to facilitate these students to help each other.

There have been many reasons for creating this initiative but the primary was hoping to improve the student experience. With mathematics teachers running many modules and having over 100 students it unfortunately can take time to reply to the numerous questions received each day. This project lets those questions get answered quickly, lets students engaged in team work, improve organisational skills and much more.

So how did we accomplish this?

Firstly volunteers were called who felt they could help their other classmates in their mathematics in a tutoring capacity and a call for a group administrator was made. These volunteers were vetted and given training to tutor others. All Mathematics students were then put in Microsoft teams group and all students were encouraged to place any specific questions in this group. The student administrator, would then assign this question to one of the student tutors. This was based on the course being split up amongst the tutors based on the topics they felt comfortable teaching.

The tutor would then contact the student looking help and organise a time for them to meet. Virtual and face to face tutoring then took place. This allowed for quick answers to student questions from their peers without having to wait for the teachers to get back to you. If the problem was solved the tutors logged this and moved on. If not and if they felt it was outside their remit to help this would be passed back to the teacher to pick up. The teacher would contact the group administrator every few days to ask if there are any problems or issues that should be brought to their attention. At the end of the semester the tutors were recognised for their hard work.

This project was a resounding success. Student uptake was consistently strong with both the tutors and students benefitting greatly. We are now in the process of implementing this with our other Engineering mathematics modules.