

PEER MENTORING CASE STUDY

Dr. Katja Hallenberg explains how Peer-Assisted Learning improved the use and monitoring of online discussion groups while also increasing the amount of individualised feedback that was possible in Psychology and Crime.

“This is large module with over 100 students, some take it as an optional module and some as compulsory. I have adapted blended learning strategies, including use of online discussion groups, which also form a part of the module assessment. While this solves the logistics issue (online seminar works around university and students’ own timetables) and provides opportunities for students to develop independent learning and research skills, the sheer number of students is still a challenge. Last year I had seven online discussion groups, each with fifteen to twenty students.” **Dr. Katja Hallenberg, Senior Lecturer**

HOW PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING HELPED OUR STUDENTS

- PAL helped facilitate effective learning among such a large and mixed cohort whilst enabling me to manage and meet the rest of my teaching and learning commitments.
- PAL helped monitor and facilitate online discussion forums by providing comments and constructive feedback as students worked through various discussion questions and research tasks.
- PAL prompted discussion with further questions and suggestions ('have you thought about... what about... is there any research evidence to support...').
- PAL read and commented on students' online learning journals, prompting more critical reflection with their own learning and sign-posting sources of help.
- There are hundreds of posts during the module and without PAL only a fraction of students would benefit from individualised feedback, something which is very much valued as evidenced by the many online exchanges between students and the PALs.
- In addition, PALs were used as 'teaching assistants' on assessment workshops, providing hands-on guidance with how to work the discussion boards and learning journals.