

PEER MENTORING CASE STUDY

Dr. Susan Civale explains how Peer Mentors and Peer-Assisted Learning improved student performance, retention rates and higher student satisfaction levels in English Literature.

"We have been using Peer-Assisted Learning leaders (PALs) for the past three years. PALs are used in conjunction with one of our first-year compulsory modules - Texts and Contexts I, which runs in Semester 1 and is required for all Combined and Single Honours students. This module is delivered as a one-hour lecture, and a two-hour seminar, each week. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) are run directly after the lecture. Obviously, we cannot require that students attend peer mentoring sessions, but rooms are booked ahead of time, and PASS is on the advertised timetable for students. The timing and advertised timetabling of these sessions help to encourage students to see them as an integral part of their course."

Dr. Susan Civale, Senior Lecturer

HOW PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING HELPED OUR STUDENTS

- PAL has improved student performance on the first-year Texts and Contexts I module, with a greater number of first-year students submitting all three assessments and a greater overall average mark for the module.
- PAL has improved retention rates in English Literature, with students who attend these sessions nearly always progressing to the next level of study.
- PAL has contributed to high student satisfaction ratings in English.
- PAL has fostered the development of other student-led activities within our programme. In 2016-17, our peer mentors set up the CCCU English Literature Student Book Club. This was direct offshoot of the cross-pollination of students from different years, a sense of programme belonging, and a desire for further student-led activities that combine academic interest in literature with opportunities for socialising. This book club meets on Friday evenings in a pub in Canterbury to discuss short readings over a drink. It has now grown to include first-, second-, and third-year students, as well as postgraduates.