

Geography Undergraduates 360° Academic Peer Learning And Mentoring 2021 - 2023: A Pilot Study

Authors : N. Ayob, N. C. Nkosi, R. P. Burger, S. J. Piketh, F. Letlaila, O. Maphosa

Abstract : South African higher tertiary institution have been faced with high dropout rates. About 50 to 60% of first years drop out to due to various reasons one being inadequate academic support. Geography 111 (GEOG 111) module is historically known for having below 50% pass rate, high dropout rate and identified as a first year risk module. For the first time GEOG 111 (2021) on the Mahikeng Campus admitted 150 students pursuing more than 6 different qualifications (BA and BSc) from the Humanities Faculty and FNAS. First year students had difficulties transitioning from secondary to tertiary institutions as we shifted to remote learning while we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. The traditional method of teaching does not encourage students to help each other. With remote learning we do not have control over what the students share and perhaps this can be a learning opportunity to embrace peer learning and change the manner in which we assess the students. The purpose of this pilot study was to assist GEOG111 students with academic challenges whilst improving their University experience. This was a qualitative study open to all GEOG111, repeaters, students who are not confident in their Geographical knowledge and never did Geography at high school level. The selected 9 Golden Key International Honour Society Geography mentors attended an academic mentor training program with module lecturers. About 17.6% of the mentees did not have a geography background however, 94% of the mentees passed, 1 mentee had a mark of 38%. 11 of the participants had a mark >60% with one student that excelled 70%. It is evident that mentorship helped students reach their academic potential. Peer learning and mentoring are associated with improved academic performance and allows the students to take charge of their learning and academic experience. Thus an important element as we transform pedagogies at higher learning institutions.

Keywords : geography, risk module, peer mentoring, peer learning

Conference Title : ICEQEAS 2022 : International Conference on Educational Quality and Educating in Academic Systems

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 03-04, 2022