

UiT

**THE ARCTIC
UNIVERSITY
OF NORWAY**

Presentation of the mentorproject for the NUAS conference in Turku

Kristoffer Wilhelmsen, project leader



What we set out to do

- Create a program to better welcome students with no prior experience
- Increase the total amount of academic guidance received by first year students
- Focus on social and academic integration



Our original model:



The model we arrived at:

- **Fall semester: 101-course on being a student**
 - Run by experienced students
 - 10-12 classes
 - Focus on social activities and basic study techniques
 - Group size: 16-20 students
- **Spring semester: academic tutoring**
 - Run by experienced students
 - 10-12 classes
 - Teach them to be academics
 - Group size: < 10

Who are the group leaders?

- Using students as group leaders has been one of our main success criteria.
- Interested students are interviewed and selected based on academic merits and interpersonal skills.
- Their role is primarily to be the students safe harbour in an otherwise chaotic university environment.
- All group leaders attend a seminar which teaches them about different student welfare-programs, digital resources and study techniques
 - Basically what they need to know in order to pass it on to their students later

The 101-course

- They all started out with a couple of classes focusing on social activities
- Moving on the students were taught which digital resources are available to them
 - Endnote, office 365 etc.
- Finally the focus was study techniques and how they should prepare for their first exams
- The subject of each class wasn't determined beforehand. The group leaders decided on the subject from class to class based on the students wishes and discussions amongst themselves.

Academic tutoring

- Group leaders as academic facilitators.
- Smaller groups
- Gives students guidance on how to approach difficult academic tasks



Effects

- Fewer «simple questions» are directed to the institutes administrators.
- Most of the students did feel that their transition into academic life has been made better by their attendance in the program.
- Some group leaderes have their eyes opened to the wonders of teaching

Costs

- All group leaders were payed 720NOK (74EUR) per class (2 hours + 4 hours preparation).
- This averaged on cirka 20 000NOK (2000EUR) a semester per group leader, each being responsible for up to 20 students for the first semester and 10 in the second one.

Discussion

- Discuss with the people next to you:
 - How can we best use students in the work to improve students academic achievement or wellbeing ?

Case

- Frida Flinkis is a university student in a course with 120 students. She's new in town and without a social network. Her academic competence is high.
- During her first semester she hasn't made many new friends, has no study group, and barely knows which institute she belongs to.
- Feeling lonely and slightly depressed she ponders moving home
- Which programs or system should be in place to make sure Frida can finish her degree?