Being ‘good company’ on the student journey – exploring roles and relationships in student support

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Being ‘good company’ on the student journey – exploring roles and relationships in student support
Who are we?

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Health and Social Care Faculty
What are we doing in our scholarship project?

- Relationships – a key element of a student’s experience of higher education.
- With other students, academics and support staff.
- Our interest is in some of the roles and relationships that play a part in supporting students successfully in their learning journeys.
- One-to-one and coaching
Why are we doing it?

- Student support is a topical area - increasing emphasis in the higher education on retention, progression and completion.
- Work in OU in reviewing and developing student support strategies.
- Greater emphasis on personalised support and on-to-one in HSC e.g. K101 and Masters.
How have you done it?

• Looking at the literature.

• Looking at the terms used to describe student support in universities in two sample regions of the UK.

• Information publicly available on websites
Some of our findings

A diverse range of terms used to describe academic related student support:

• Personal tutoring
• Learner support
• Learning advisor
• Study support
• Study skills
• Coaching
• Mentoring
Varied areas of focus:

- On the task e.g. study skills such as essay writing.
- On the person e.g. personal tutor
- On the process e.g. mentoring
Different ways to describe roles:

• Advising
• Coaching
• Guiding
• Mentoring
• Supporting
• Tutoring
Does it matter what we call it?

• We would argue that it does, and that further work is needed to look at the roles and relationships involved in student support.

• Our particular interest is in coaching. This is an area that has not attracted significant interest in relation to student support in higher education UK. It is however, a common approach to student support in the US.
Student journey theories
Baxter Magolda (2002)
Self Authorship

1. Following formulas
2. The crossroads
3. Becoming the author
4. Having an internal foundation
Cognitive development: How do I know?
- Following Formulas: Believe what “authority” believes
- Crossroads: See need for own vision
- Author of One’s Life: Choose own beliefs
- Internal Foundation: Grounded in internal belief system

Intrapersonal development: Who am I?
- Define self through external others
- See need for internal definition
- Choose own values, identity
- Grounded in internal coherent sense of self

Interpersonal development: How we construct relationships
- Approval seeking in relationships
- See need for authenticity
- Being true to self – mutual needs met
- Grounded in mutuality
Changing levels
Changing roles
Jones (2009)

Level 3
Academic Coach

Level 2
Academic Advisor

Level 1
Academic Personal Tutor

Increasing Independence

Personal Tutor Scheme
How it has influenced practice

• Incorporation into staff development

• Feeding into development of tuition strategy on Masters
The academic support shapeshifter!
'Pooh and Piglet walked home thoughtfully together in the golden evening, and for a long time they were silent'