The current context

In an effort to remain both competitive and attractive to prospective and established students, Higher Education institutions, both at a national and international level, are actively seeking innovative ways ‘of improving the student experience and student progression/retention’ (National Audit Office, 2002 in Stevenson, 2009: 117).

Learning and Teaching and Tutorials

Tutorials are considered to be an integral part (Robinson, 2008: 59) of the student experience for taught modules on an undergraduate practice-based degree at the University of Derby. Traditionally these take place following the taught input for the module to ensure students are adequately prepared to engage in their module coursework.

Aim of the research

The aim of this research was to critically evaluate the TSS by exploring students’ perceptions of the value and benefits of tutorials prior to and post their active engagement with the TSS as part of a Level 5 research based taught module.

Objectives of the research

1. To explore students’ perceptions of tutorials as part of their learning experience on taught modules.
2. To evaluate the perceived ‘preparedness’ of students to undertake coursework following their engagement with the TSS.

Face to face tutorial with tutor

Students signed up for and attended individual/group tutorials. Students were asked to take ownership of the tutorial ‘agenda’.

Research findings

Research findings suggest that whilst students acknowledged the value of tutorials in terms of helping them to achieve better grades, there was strong opinion in terms of the way that these should be organised (either as opposed to student driven) and what takes place during them. Student engagement with the TSS resulted in:

- A significant increase in the amount of time students spent on tutorials (McDonald, 2010) of the student experience for taught/taught modules.
- 82% of respondents felt well prepared or very well prepared.
- 100% of respondents found the TSS valuable.
- 82% of respondents felt well prepared or very well prepared for the writing of their module coursework.
- 98% of respondents felt well prepared or very well prepared for the writing of their module coursework.

Conclusions

Whilst there was student calling (to keep using the tutorial station method). It was much much better than the previous method of 15 mins’ (student’s written comments), more research is needed to evaluate the positive impact of any of the system on improved student attainment.

References


Further reading