

Dissemination Partner Case Study (5)

Department of Engineering, University of Hull

Gareth Neighbour – Admissions Tutor

Gavin Cutler – Project Manager on PROGRESS FDTL (3)

Background

The Department of Engineering at Hull University have been concerned with a number of issues relating to the retention of first year students. One area they were keen to improve was the Induction process. In recent years the Department of Engineering have lowered their acceptance grades and the intake of first year students has become more diverse, they also take a number of foreign students and students from HNC courses. It was suggested that because Engineering is viewed as quite a macho subject new students sometimes found it difficult to mix and make friends quickly. Organising Induction activities that helped students settle quickly was viewed as important. The involvement of the Engineering Department at Hull adds a breadth to the SPAT materials and demonstrates their wider generic applicability.

Good Practice

In October 2002 the Department of Engineering at Hull introduced a social/academic fun activity for students. It was called the Orange Tree Game (OTG) and involved both staff and students. The OTG took place in the laboratories of the Engineering department. The game enabled students to be introduced to lab procedures, to a number of staff and to get to know fellow students. The OTG was split in two parts; one hour was allocated to designing a structure to hold an orange and the second half of the game was actually building it. Feedback from students was really positive, 97% really enjoyed the game, 90% made new friends, 90% wanted another similar activity to be held and 70% said after the game they would be comfortable in approaching a member of staff.

Use of Materials

The Department of engineering only used the Induction Checklist, but the SPAT project collaborated in an advisory capacity on general Induction issues and procedures and helped with suggestions for the OTG.

When asked about the materials as whole it was suggested that:

- The language was too flowery for engineers
- There was too much repetition
- They would be using them more substantially in the future as there are moves to link with some local partner colleges and Foundation degrees

- It was suggested including something on feeling excluded from the academic community
- Re-ordering the materials into staff and students
- Identify clearly staff other than academics who would be interested in the materials

Customised resources available on SPAT CD and website:

- Student induction checklist
- Department new student record form
- Department student medical form
- Induction Welcome Lecture
- Registration Checklist
- Departmental New students Qualification Form
- Year 1 Team Game
- Tower Builder Template
- The Orange Tree Game