

# Engaging Students with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Through Peer Learning Programs

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**ABSTRACT:** Peer learning programs such as Supplemental Instruction (SI), Peer Assisted Learning (PAL), and Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) enable students who have been trained as mentors to contribute to the development of teaching and learning, through the frequent feedback and reflection that is offered to them by the students they are mentoring. This feedback, about curriculum, pedagogy, course delivery and student experience, can feedforward into course improvements, and offer staff the opportunity to reflect on their own academic practice.

Working either in one-to-one or small group settings, the peer mentors often expertly facilitate and support other students' learning, developing their own awareness of what it takes to 'be a good..' teacher, and a 'successful learner'. This opportunity develops mentors own practice of learning and teaching, and infuses the ethos of partnership and community across a degree program, as well as among the staff involved.

This panel session will offer participants the opportunity to learn from and engage in discussions with peer learning coordinators and student mentors from a range of institutions. Representatives from the International Academic Peer Learning (IAPL) network will provide a forum for questions and answers, and share examples of practice from their own and other institutions. The IAPL network is an international community of practice that welcomes a broad range of peer learning models in higher education. This session will offer the opportunity to discuss synergies and build partnerships between the peer learning and SoTL communities, to develop our mutual understandings of student-involved pedagogic practice.

Students identify many advantages in being involved in partnership work with their lecturers and peers, such as the opportunity to 'get to know, and be known by' colleagues that they would not usually work with. Gaining an insider-knowledge of departmental and institutional practices is of benefit to students and mentors, and can result in an increased sense of belonging and community, as well as transforming their own identity. Panel members will raise awareness of the challenges and benefits of peer learning to the SoTL community, and signpost the growing body of international research and evaluation of peer programs that is currently taking place.