

GUEST EDITORIAL

Tutoring and Mentoring

Nelia Frade*

South African institutions of higher education (HE) have increasingly come under pressure to broaden access to historically under-represented groups who are often underprepared for tertiary education as a result of apartheid-era secondary schooling (White Paper, 2013). This has resulted in student enrolments becoming increasingly diverse with respect to racial, cultural, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds (Underhill & McDonald, 2010). In an attempt to address these issues and promote increased throughput rates, institutions of HE have increasingly begun to introduce tutoring, including supplemental instruction (SI) and peer-assisted learning (PAL) and mentoring programmes. In so doing, they have begun to recognise that tutoring and mentoring are not just nice to have but can provide significant opportunities for engaged teaching and learning, and access to the epistemological discourse of the academy.

However, the value of tutoring and mentoring programmes lies in how effectively they are planned and implemented. Well-developed programmes provide the ideal opportunity for students to actively engage with study content, build relationships within a supportive peer-led environment, and become socially inducted into the institution (Kuh & Pike, 2005). Stakeholders involved with these programmes should have a general understanding of the goals, establishment and maintenance of these programmes in order to maximise their effectiveness (Clarence, 2016). In light of this, tutoring and mentoring programmes require ongoing collaboration between academic staff, tutors/mentors and staff development professionals, in order to create and sustain effective teaching and learning environments for students (Clarence, 2016). Furthermore, students who serve in these positions must receive the necessary training and support to fulfil these roles effectively. Training is critical for developing the capabilities and skills required for peer-led activities (Keup, 2012). Intentional and ongoing training is a prerequisite for any successful tutorial and mentoring programme (Latino & Ashcraft, 2012). Lastly, opportunities should be created for stakeholders to evaluate, reflect and improve practice on an ongoing basis to ensure that these programmes remain effective and responsive to student needs (Underhill, Clarence-Fincham & Petersen, 2014).

* Dr Nelia Frade is Senior Coordinator: Unit for Tutor Development, Centre for Academic Staff Development, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Email: neliaf@uj.ac.za

This special issue of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA)* has encouraged contributors to rethink and re-imagine the pedagogies that underpin tutoring and mentoring practices within the South African HE landscape. The issue offers an exciting diversity of approaches to tutoring and mentoring. Some articles focus on the role of tutoring (including SI and PAL) to promote student engagement, multilingualism, collaborative and cooperative learning, to enhance student learning and to promote quality assessment. Other articles offer a systematic review of student support programmes to highlight effective support practices and guidelines for implementing programmes that promote social integration. Then, at the other end of the continuum, there are articles focusing on online mentoring to promote critical and reflexive thinking and the perceived impact of mentoring programmes on student performance. Lastly, this *JSAA* issue ends with an article that provides an initial national snapshot of the development and experiences of peer leaders at six South African institutions of higher education. The wide variety of topics should offer something of interest to all who have been involved in tutoring and mentoring programmes, and allow organisers and facilitators to share ideas.

Acknowledgements

This special issue of *JSAA* is published with the support of funding from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) National Collaborative Teaching Development Grant (TDG): “The improvement of teaching and learning in South African universities through researching and evaluating TDG projects in the First Year Experience (FYE) initiatives, Tutorials, Mentoring and Writing Retreats.” The project was centred at the Fundani Centre for Higher Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), conceptualised by James Garraway and coordinated by Lucy Alexander. The project proposal was endorsed at the outset by the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA).

This *JSAA* issue, which was driven and guest edited by Nelia Frade, assisted by Najwa Norodien-Fataar, is intended as a vehicle to focus attention on tutoring and mentoring in South African higher education institutions. As part of the TDG grant project, it provides a forum for publishing some of the resulting research as well as that of participants involved in tutoring and mentoring from the wider academic community. Some of the research in this issue benefited from association with and debate at the joint conference of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) and HELTASA in November 2016. It is hoped that the contributions to this issue serve to strengthen debate and exploration of this important component of the higher education landscape.

References

- Clarence, S. (2016). Peer tutors as learning and teaching partners: A cumulative approach to building peer tutoring capacity in higher education. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.14426/cristal.v4i1.69>
- Department of Education. (2013). White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. *Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system*. Pretoria, South Africa: Department of Higher Education and Training.

- Keup, J.R. (2012). *New Directions in Higher Education: Peer Leadership in Higher Education* (p.157). San Francisco, C.A.: Jossey-Bass. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20001>
- Kuh, G.D. & Pike, G.R. (2005). A typology of student engagement for American colleges and universities. *Research in Higher Education*, 46(2), 185–209. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-004-1599-0>
- Latino, J.A. & Ashcraft, M.L. (2012). *Using Peers in the Classroom*. Columbia, S.C.: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience, and Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.
- Underhill, J., Clarence-Fincham, J. & Petersen, N. (2014). Developing a mentorship programme for junior lecturers working with student tutors at a South African university: Emerging shifts in pedagogy and identity. *Education as Change*, 18(Supp.), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2014.926828>
- Underhill, J. & McDonald, J. (2010). Collaborative tutor development: Enabling a transformative paradigm in a South African university. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18(2), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13611261003678853>

How to cite:

Frade, N. (2017). Tutoring and Mentoring. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 5(2), ix–xi. DOI: 10.24085/jsaa.v5i2.2698