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Efficacy of Peer Support for Second-Year Mathematicians-student and staff perspectives

Day 2 – Parallel V (14.00-14.45)

In 2011 the Department of Mathematical Sciences and the Mathematics Education Centre at Loughborough University embarked upon an HE STEM Project curriculum development initiative designed to better engage students, improve success rates, and enhance satisfaction levels on two second-year mathematics modules, Vector Spaces and Complex Variables. A key element of the project was the introduction of a peer support scheme under which third and fourth year students – known as student leaders - offered weekly peer-assisted-learning sessions in addition to the lectures and staffed tutorials traditionally provided.

This talk will provide:

- an overview of how the scheme worked and how the volunteer student leaders were trained;
- information about the uptake by second-year mathematicians and their resulting examination performance;
- a description of the benefits accruing to the student leaders.

This will be a joint presentation by the project leader and an undergraduate mathematician who was on the receiving end of peer support in 2011/12 and who then worked as a student leader in 2012/13. We hope this approach will provide both staff and student perspectives on this novel intervention and encourage others to consider similar interventions intended to improve the student experience.