

# Building a Learning Community in Mathematics through Peer Support

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# What is Peer Assisted Learning?

- Pioneered in 1973 as (Supplemental Instruction) in the USA
- Adapted for use in the UK in the early 1990s
- Higher level students helping 1st years to learn
- Mentors work in pairs with up to 10 students
- Weekly 1 hour timetabled sessions
- Compulsory for first year students

# Role of a PAL Leader



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- Lead activities to help learning
- Develop understanding, not rote learning
- Share experiences
- Act as a role model
- Build confidence in mentees
- **Not a tutor/lecturer!**



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# Benefits of using PAL Schemes

- 1<sup>st</sup> year students
- Student mentors
- Academics
- the School





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# How mentoring worked previously

- Given a peer mentor in induction week
- Met during week 0, then in week 1
- Little interaction between years
- Mentoring had very short lifespan







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# How mentoring Works Now

- PAL mentoring scheme
- First years integrate quickly
- Meetings continue throughout the academic year
- Helps students adjust to University study





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# PAL Mentoring

- Meet once a week
- Sessions have an academic focus
- Week zero events for induction





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# Effect of New System



- First years well integrated quickly
- Opportunities for everyone, in all years
- First years are inspired to carry this on





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# Feedback from first year students

The best aspects of the scheme were:

- getting help with academic work/problems;
- getting to know other students better;
- having an informal/safe environment to ask questions.





# Feedback from mentors

- Skills developed by mentors:
  - organisation
  - communication
  - presentation
  - patience
  - leadership



The experience also deepened their own understanding of the discipline



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# Feedback from mentors

*The PAL scheme was a great way to meet new people, to build a good rapport with the newest year of students and to help reinforce my own knowledge. It's true that you learn better if you can teach it to somebody else.*

Going over first year questions ended up helping me as well. Also, it teaches you to be a supportive member of someone else's experience here at Leeds.



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# Academic Staff Feedback

"I certainly agree that this is a good scheme; a number of my students have mentioned that they found this to be helpful. So thanks very much to everyone involved!"

"the students seem better prepared for their tutorials than in previous years, and don't seem to be asking many of the simpler questions."



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# PAL TWO

- Student led peer support in year 2
- Demand from students
- Organised by students
- Drop in
- Module based system

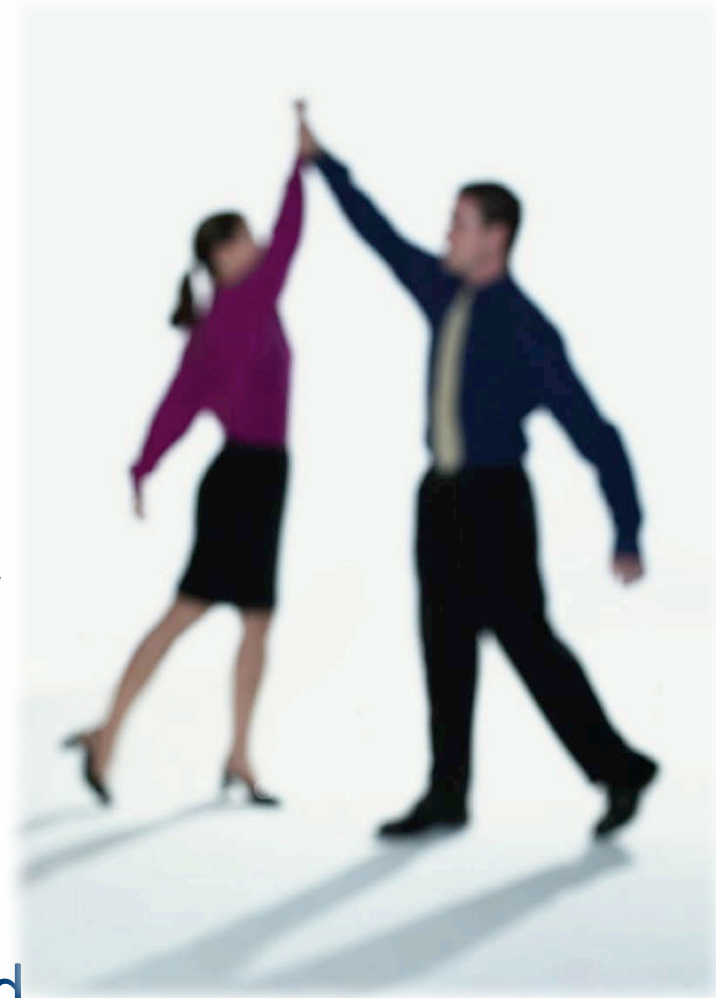






# Making it work

- Ensure buy-in from staff
- Compulsory timetabled sessions
- Thorough training
- Regular contact with mentors
- A co-ordinator to evaluate delivery and run debriefs
- Manage students' expectations
- Celebrate success – HEAR approved



***Any questions?***

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