LEAP UP – Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program: Peer to Peer Mentoring for High School Students from Refugee Backgrounds

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INTRODUCTION

“Repeat business or behaviour can be bribed; Loyalty has to be earned”
Janet Robinson

Mentoring is often defined as a one-to-one interaction between peers, or an academic to peer interaction, to develop areas of self-esteem, connectedness, identity, and academic attitudes.

The retention of students is now considered equally as important as the attraction of them (Helgesen, 2008; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). To provide value and satisfaction to students, it is vital that universities understand first year students’ needs and provide opportunities to optimize their learning experience (Ledden, Kalafatis & Samouel, 2007).

Results

Benefits of Mentoring to Mentors

- Feeling of Empowerment
- Increased Motivation
- Increased Confidence

“Seeing mentees more confident about what they are doing and their future career goals”

“Has given me a broader understanding of students with a refugee background and has provided me with the ability to help those who truly deserve it”

Fulfilment of Needs and Goal-Attainment

First year mentors also indicated that having shared values and interacted with faculty staff members made them aware of their purpose in life and university. It increased their academic skills, their positive perception about the value of higher education and overall provided them with a sense of satisfaction.

“Seeing the value the mentee gets from their participation, formal recognition of participation in the program useful for job applications, testing my own communication and planning skills”

Outcomes

Students felt accepted, respected, and valued (Goodlad, 1998). Student development of a sense of belonging is key to their success in higher education as illustrated by Figure 1 below:

Recommendation

We suggest universities focus on the development of higher education services that meet and potentially exceed students’ expectations, and which also provide students with an enriching educational experience. A community spirit with the university is critical in shaping a student’s journey at university.