

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) - Learning Support and Veterinary Medicine Working Together

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Peer assisted learning (PAL) is an exciting, educationally robust, student-centred learning and teaching strategy, which, if implemented carefully within a curriculum, can enhance the educational experience for both peer tutors and tutees. PAL should be implemented with care, however, and should not be seen as a “cheap alternative” to formal teaching by academic staff.

At the Royal Veterinary College, University of London, Ms Helen Shore, Learning Support Officer worked with Dr Sarah Baillie, Senior Lecturer and veterinary surgeon, to develop a PAL programme for a very specific context – teaching palpation skills using the Haptic Cow simulator. The project ran as a pilot in 2007 and again with a few adjustments in 2008. It is now embedded into the curriculum and the use of PAL is being explored in other areas. The success of this initiative demonstrated some of the benefits of close and collaborative work between learning support and the academic subject specialist.

During the workshop we plan to identify areas in a variety of disciplines where PAL could be implemented and trialled. We will also raise awareness and promote best practice in the use of PAL, particularly with regard to training and supporting peer tutors. This workshop will provide colleagues with an overview of the key concepts behind PAL, and will introduce a framework for implementing a PAL course, which participants can then take back to their own institutions.

Presenters:

Ms Helen Shore, Learning Support Officer, Royal Veterinary College

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