

Throwing a lifeline – intervention strategies for students at risk  
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The research is based on a pilot scheme for 1<sup>st</sup> year students of computing at UCE and is situated within a heavily researched field of the first year experience. As a school based student support tutor, the researcher sees herself as an intermediary between students who might have negative perceptions of their learning and their tutors. The research is also situated within theories of participation & needs and assumes that, using the analogy of an iceberg, we only see what the student chooses to present and not the greater needs which remain hidden. She follows the triple C model espoused by Smith & Beggs 2002 wherein care, control & consistency dominate ie it's very important to show that we are caring whilst retaining control at all times.

The researcher looked at overall pass rates for 1<sup>st</sup> year students & noticed that these decreased in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. She invited 40 students who had 2 out of 3 or 3 out of 3 fails for informal interviews to try and identify underlying problems. A quarter of those invited attended and an action plan was made with a contract for further monitoring. The following year this number increased to 50%. Some main findings were that students who fail to attend at least 70% of teaching sessions have a 2 in 3 chance of failure. More importantly, a student who is absent during the first 2 weeks of any module automatically becomes a cause for concern.

The delegates then divided into groups to discuss 4 case studies of students in need and find positive intervention strategies. The concluding theme was a need to separate issues into those related to academic needs and those warranting additional learning needs support. However, most of the institutions represented had very diverse policies and facilities so although there was a consensus of ideas, the methods of implementation were varied

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