

Nurturing seedlings: How we support under-achieving students

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Abstract

The University of Waikato Pathways College Academic English Language programmes are designed to improve the language skills of international students and prepare them for university study. Academic learning support and pastoral care is an integral part of the student support provision aimed at improving student success and retention and transition into degree study. In 2011 the College introduced and implemented an Academic Monitoring/Intervention Programme to assist underachieving students, supported by the literature, models of good practice and a review of student data. To date the College has monitored and supported 150 students. Looking at student attendance, engagement in the class and programme, and success, bilingual student advisors meet students regularly and on an individual basis to identify what is going on for the student, and offer the student support. The support that is offered and provided can take a number of shapes and is geared to respond to the student on an individual level.

This presentation will report on a number of case studies in which a range of intervention and support was put in place for a range of students with different backgrounds, nationalities and study goals. This presentation will outline what has been successful from the support and intervention, and will examine student feedback on the support that they received. Finally, the presentation will consider how the current support system might be improved according to student feedback.

Biography:

Mera Tan is the Academic Student Advisor at Pathways College, the University of Waikato. Pathways College offers Academic English Language programmes and they are designed to improve the language skills of international students and prepare them for university study. Mera has more than 10 years experience in working directly with international students, providing enrolment, academic learning support and pastoral care. Her work at the University has been an exciting and rewarding blend of intercultural communication, administration and advocacy.

Mera holds a Postgraduate Diploma in International Communication and has been an active ISANA member since 2008.