

Moving beyond tokenism: Defining and strengthening the relationship between PASS Leaders & Subject Co-ordinators for enhanced outcomes

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Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS), is a core transition and academic success strategy at the University of Wollongong. PASS is attached to high risk subjects and students who have recently completed the subject are employed as PASS Leaders. These peer facilitators receive extensive training and run weekly one hour study sessions that follow the content of the subject. PASS Leaders attend up to 50% of the supported subject lectures and are expected to connect with the Subject Coordinators. The level of connection/ communication is variable. From Jan – June 2017, 100 UOW PASS Leaders have connected with 49 different Subject Coordinators across 8 onshore UOW campuses. A renewed focus has been placed on encouraging the formation of stronger partnership between PASS Leaders and Subject Coordinators, informed by ‘Students as Partners’ literature (Healy & Harrington, 2014), to enhance two way communications, to create a 360 degree feedback loop and to further mutually beneficial collaboration. As outlined in Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felton (2014), building trust, reducing the perception of risk and enhancing interdependence have been integral in achieving this renewed focus.

Subject Coordinators

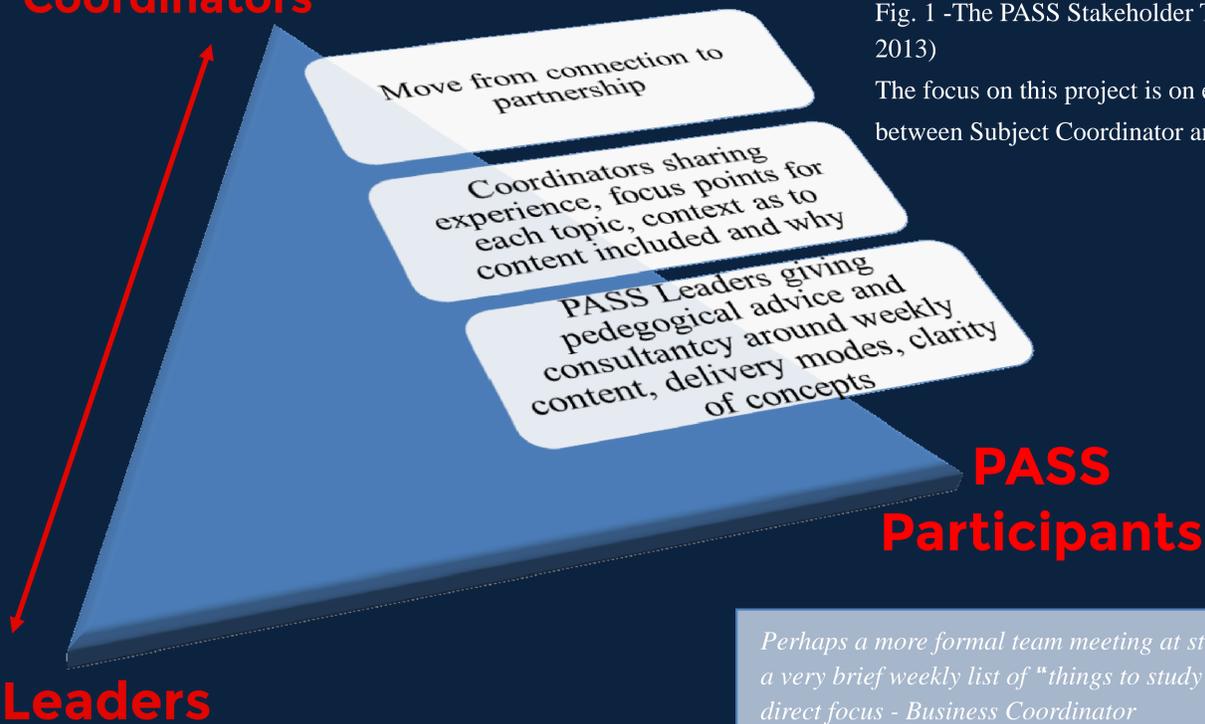
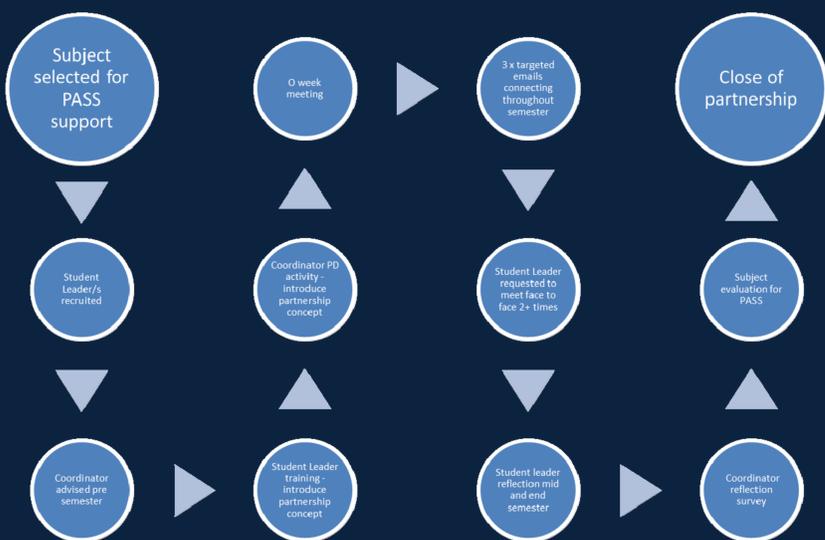


Fig. 1 -The PASS Stakeholder Triangle ((Huang, Pepper et al. 2013)

The focus on this project is on evolving the relationship between Subject Coordinator and PASS Leaders

PASS Leaders

Fig. 2 - Partnership timeline: enabling strategies used to enhance capacity to form a mutually beneficial partnership



Perhaps a more formal team meeting at start of Subject and a very brief weekly list of “things to study” at each lecture to direct focus - Business Coordinator

I emailed in regards to difficulty with a particular topic. He was happy to have received this feedback and said he would address it in the coming weeks in one of the Lectures - Economics Leader

I found their [Leaders] comments very useful! - Business Coordinator

I offered suggestions to [Leader] each week after she sent me her ideas for the class. She was exceptional - Management Coordinator

He [Coordinator] was very open to giving me activity ideas if I was ever stuck. I would also let him know if there was a concept the students were struggling with and he would go over it again, which I think the students really benefited from—Language Leader

A good way to keep in contact is to email after the topic has been completed, informing them if the majority of students understood or needed more help with it - Science Leader

Fig. 3 - End of Semester feedback



Future Opportunities

- Focus groups with Subject Coordinators and Leaders to further explore how they see the partnership evolving and opportunities that may result
- Extend initiative to wider teaching team, not just Subject Coordinators. At times Subject Coordinators are not the Lecturers and Tutors. This means an adjusted model may be necessary
- Create more scaffolded opportunities to build partnership and offer feedback. Some partnerships have made it here already. Those that haven't may require a more formal initial meeting, hosted by PASS staff. Leaders and Coordinators receive a plan for exactly when to connect – i.e. fortnightly, mid semester, end of semester etc.
- PASS Leaders are required to attend up to 50% of the Subject Lectures – perhaps opportunity for teaching evaluation point? Alternatively PASS Leaders could be utilised in course reviews and teaching evaluation as pedagogical consultants for subjects they are NOT Leaders for

Questions, comments or interested in learning more?

For a digital version, full references and commentary please visit: uow.edu.au/student/services/pass/centre/research

