

Promoting Learner Autonomy Through Mentoring



What are the aims of this project?

Working with six students who have Asperger Syndrome, existing mentoring provision will be evaluated and developed.

The aims of the project are as follows:

- To evaluate mentoring arrangements with a view to ascertaining the extent to which they promote learner autonomy.
- To develop, deliver and evaluate mentor training to promote learner autonomy.
- To draw up, implement and evaluate guidelines and a format for mentor/ mentee agreements which are explicit about the aim to promote learner autonomy.
- To share good practice locally, nationally and internationally.

Project Leader

Nicola Martin

Email: n.martin@shu.ac.uk

Telephone: 0114 225 4576

What is the background / rationale?

The Disabled Student Allowance is able to fund mentoring but there has so far been no systematic interrogation of whether this promotes learner autonomy. Students with Asperger Syndrome are present in all UK universities and their numbers are increasing. Research evidence suggests that students with Asperger Syndrome find mentoring useful. Research which has asked students to reflect on how far mentoring has developed learner autonomy is lacking. The project aims to interrogate this systematically and to go on to produce good practice guidance which will have application beyond SHU.

What are the benefits to student learning?

Students with Asperger Syndrome will have access to mentoring which is more precisely geared to developing learner autonomy and mentors will be better developed to deliver on this agenda.

The Autism Centre is aiming to raise its profile across the UK and beyond. DSST already has a national reputation for excellence. The project is in keeping with the participatory, social model research ethos which has been developed in both teams.

How will this project be evaluated?

The project will be evaluated through interrogating examples of the development of learner autonomy over a twelve month period from the perspectives of mentor and student. Further to this dissemination events will give an opportunity for a wide range of feedback.