



MONASH University



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How to continue student engagement from enrolment through orientation and into semester

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Mentor program pre-2009

- Peer to peer mentoring
- 8 new students with 1 later-year trained mentor
- Each mentor group has a 'buddy' mentor group
- Students are allocated to a group based on where they live
- Program ran formally from orientation into first semester, but in reality only went for orientation period due to low uptake.





Motivations for altering the program

- **Feedback from first years and mentors. They wanted:**
 - More opportunities to get to know each other in Orientation week
 - Assistance in engaging first year students beyond Orientation
- **University direction**
 - Monash's student experience framework
- **We wanted:**
 - Creative, team building tasks, to highlight key transition issues
 - Enhanced links between first year students and key information sources





First change: Online forum for new students

- **Blackboard site: *FY2009 -My community***
 - Moderated , members only space to seek answers.
 - One discussion board, mentor challenge material, resources from Orientation and links to web resources (e.g. *First year – getting started website*)
- **Blackboard page attracted 3729 user sessions.**
 - Highest usage was before orientation and first three weeks of semester.
 - All but 29 students visited , most came an average of 12 times and 108 students were still visiting in June.
 - Why did they visit? 1. discussion board, 2. Mentor challenge, 3. resources





Second change: Extension of mentor program activities into semester

- **Week 1: Familiarising yourself with uni: where to find things and people: Scavenger hunt**
- **Week 2: Academic changes: differences and good study practices: Crossword**
- **Week 3: Seeking help: services at the university: design a board game**
- **Week 4: Survival week social bowling!**





What worked

- **Cross promotion good: website, enrolment day, blog/ MUSO site, letter to students, between each extension activity**
- **Collaboration between staff in all areas – particularly Learning Skills and Health, Wellbeing and Development**

and what didn't

- **Need for more engaging and varied mentor challenge activities suited to young adults.**
- **Greater need to utilise dynamic nature of blackboard**