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General Description:

Title: Tutoring at IST
Keywords: 1st year students; student support; academic integration; improvement of teaching;
Starting date: 2003
Dimensions and categories:
(Click on the dimension and category/ies your practice is related to)

	Financial feasibility	Social and environmental responsibility	People	Recognition & Reputation	Quality Management	Infrastructure & Equipment	International orientation	Regional engagement
Education		x	x	x	x			
Research								
Knowledge Technology transfer								

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Webpage of the practice (if any): http://tutorado.ist.utl.pt/en

Characteristics of the strategic management practice:
Executive summary (maximum 250 words)

Focus of the practice (maximum 300 words)
(*Describe the initial situation, the context and objectives. Along with the justification of its needs, the level of integration within the context and the value added*)

Implementation of the practice (maximum 300 words)

The Tutoring Program involves five main areas: training (learning to learn, soft skills, learning to think for students and practical tutorial models for teachers), follow up (meetings and coaching for teachers and students alike, including student delegates), monitoring (performance frame, academic course critical points), dissemination (institutional presentation, homepage, facebook, flyers) and assessment (internal and external). In the scope of the Tutoring Program assessment, annual and semi-annual reports on the students, teachers and school activities are produced, gathering quantitative and qualitative data, collected among others by surveys. The results are only available in Portuguese and are summarized in the factsheet mentioned in the previous section. Each academic year, the Tutoring Program staff prepares with Program Coordinators the tutoring activities for the ensuing year, taking into consideration assessment results from previous year, preferences and needs of the specific Course and Academic Area Management Board and Pedagogical Council Guidelines for that Academic Year.

An important part of the planning for each year involves the identification of the program tutors for that year (1 for each 15 students, approximately). A Tutor is a teacher at IST, teaching classes at the tutees Program, therefore occupying a privileged position to counsel and support newcomers to the university, mainly in what regards improving academic outcomes and during the process of decision making concerning academic life and future career choices alike.

A Tutor is a volunteer experienced teacher, motivated to help IST's students, usually being he a former student at this school. The Tutor is available on demand for the student (in person, during classes, through the telephone and/or e-mail), and in the beginning of the first year by actively reaching the student, either during scheduled meetings or through e-mail contacts. In order to monitor students results, the Tutor as access to his Tutees academic results during their first two years at the university (through performance frame).

Achieved results (maximum 300 words)

Between 2003/04 and 2010/11 academic years, the number of tutees that participated in the tutoring program grew at a rate of 21,6%, the number of tutors grew at a rate of 49,7% and the number of Programmes covered grew at a rate of 72,0%. Between these same academic years, covering a total range of eight years, 42 training actions aimed at teachers were carried out, reaching a total of 377 participants; 124 training actions aimed at students were carried out, reaching a total of 1110 participants.
In the 2010/11 students annual survey, 89,7% of the (1st and 2nd year students knew the Tutoring Program, 56,4% participated in the program, 54,7% considered the

Program useful or very useful, 46,4% received at least 3 e-mails from his/her tutor, 20,1% did not participate in the program because they considered it unnecessary, 66,2% feel they can count on their Tutor presently and in the future. The three areas of the Tutoring Program the students' value the most are: support/information about IST, academic adaptation/integration and contact with somebody experienced (Universe: 1419 students, Sample: 616 students and response rate of 43,4%).

In general, planned objectives, mission and goals for the Tutoring Program have been reached, incremental changes being introduced every year following end-of-the-school-year assessment, although improvements are still in need in order to promote a more broad acceptance of the Program, expressed by even higher rates of students participating in the Program, as well as a higher rate of contact hours between students and their tutors, preferably leading to an early identification and intervention with the academic underachievers and to a measurable impact on their academic results.

Assessment and review (maximum 200 words)
(*Describe the evaluation process and review and proposals made for improvement identified and introduced into the practice. And the degree of learning from the results obtained and not obtained*)

A broader acceptance of the Tutoring Program seems to be dependent upon finding a way of having all the students from each Programme attending regular meetings with their Tutor through at least their first two years at IST, or until they have reached full integration (measured by academic results as well as subjective wellbeing). Since in southern European countries (as opposed to northern European countries) there's not an active culture of Tutoring practices in Higher Education, GATu team has been trying some strategies to improve contact hours between tutors and tutees along the first year of the students stay in IST. In the Mechanical Engineering Programme at IST this contact hours have been made compulsory through the attribution of tutors to student tutees at Portfolio course (1st year, 2nd semester) since 2006/07 academic year. The contact hours of the students with the tutors improved in the 2nd semester due to the need of meetings for preparation of the final presentation of the students (and the tutor was responsible for orienting his 15 or so students in this presentation).

Therefore, in the 2010/11 academic year a new Course was included (in the 1st year, 1st semester) – Introduction to Mechanical Engineering - following approximately the Portfolio format, aiming at increasing student's soft skills (time management, team work and communication skills) and motivation for the Programme through lab visits and seminars run by professionals in the industry and other areas relevant for the profession. Tutors have a great amount of contact hours with their students in this format, starting from the first week after classes start.

Innovative character and transferability (maximum 200 words)
(*Describe the aspects of internal innovation (at the institution) and innovation as respect to the context (at the university system) of the practice. As well as the elements and aspects that can be applied to a different context and possible recommendations that should be taken into account in a benchmarking opportunity*)

The combination of tutoring practices with soft skills training within a first year introductory course is, as far as we know, unique either for the university system and for the IST (no other courses at this institution combine these two elements, although

a general form of tutoring is present in most IST Programmes). Qualitative data collected through the years show us that hours of contact and quality of contact between tutor and tutees in the beginning of 1st year improves if tutors are teachers from the students Programme and if they meet regularly with them during academic activities (e.g. project teachers at Architecture Programme, or Lab teachers at Chemistry Programme), as is also the case with Portfolio and Introduction to Mechanical Engineering. These courses are mandatory, 2 classes/week, 1h30 each with a weight of 1,5ECTS assessed by a group project composed by a written paper and an oral presentation, and 3 types of classes compose it – working, seminar and tutorial plus research labs visits at IST. Tutorial classes are taught both by tutors and GATu team members (mainly psychologists). Results are encouraging showing the students are satisfied with the tutorial classes, particularly with the writing and presentation skills classes considering them useful for their future academic and professional life.

A good, strong and respectful collaboration among tutors (Engineers) and Tutorado team (Psychologists) is needed, with a great effort being made at the preparation of joint classes, taking advantage of different sources of knowledge. A Strong belief of Programme Coordinators and the School Pedagogical and Academic Boards in the advantages of the Program, is reinforced each year and replicability of this practice in other institutions is evident in various requests made by other Portuguese HEIs in order to better know IST's Tutoring model.

Upload supporting documents (max 5MB)

For a quick view of the evolution of the Tutoring Program since 2003 until 2012, see http://tutorado.ist.utl.pt/files/FactSheet_04_12_EN.pdf .

 Authorization to publish this practice in EUSUM website?

- Yes