

Facilitating a Student-to-Student Mentorship (STSM) programme using Information Technology Tools

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Abstract

It is the tradition of all learning processes to have a teacher, a guardian, and a learner. All these are basic building blocks of learning as both a process and a tool to empower individuals. Generally, in life individuals have always relied formally or informally on others to learn, grow, and gain experience in their respective fields. But the learning process has always not been comfortable. It comprises of various activities such as mistakes, failures, lessons, and eventually accomplishments. The concept of mentoring has been well researched across various economic and academic sectors over many years. In South Africa (SA), different tertiary institutions have implemented various mentorship programmes for diverse reasons such as improving pass rates, class attendance and so on. Although the concept of mentoring has a long tradition in higher learning institutions (HLI); it is still not widely implemented, particularly within SA HLI. This is also evident by a lack of research output on this topic at various academic forums, conferences, and seminars in SA. It has also been widely reported that the key reason for high drop-out rates at HLI in SA, is poor academic performance among other reasons. The main objective of this paper is to propose a STSM programme that can be applied in the faculty of ICT at Tshwane University of Technology to improve learners' pass rates, participation, class attendance, and above all improve learners' confidence in their studies thus growing and gaining skills that will enable them to be employable in the near future. In this paper, we further present IT tools such as online mentorship system that can be used in facilitating the STSM programme. The tools are meant to be used for activities such as booking a mentor, tracking learners' progress, pass rates, virtual mentoring, etc.