Embedded mentoring with a focus on whanaungatanga, maanakitanga and ako
Vandana Minhas-Taneja & Chip Matthews, University of Auckland

Widely known mentoring programmes within higher education are those that are stand-alone, functioning on a voluntary basis (Chester, Burton, Xenos, Elgar, & Denny, 2013). There is evidence to suggest that students who attend stand-alone mentoring programmes highly benefit from them, and get better grades (Murray, 2006). However attendance to these voluntary sessions are generally around 30% of the class population, meaning that the service does not reach those that truly need it the most. This then begs the question, is this the most equitable way to deliver peer support to incoming, new to university students?

A study conducted by Colmar Brunton with students who had withdrawn from the Faculty of Arts in University of Auckland showed that many students left because they did not feel any sense of belonging with the university, and nor did they make any meaningful connections with other students. This then led to an in-depth analysis, as well as hosting talanoa with our current students, and student mentors. A key question that emerged during this phase was why do student mentors function outside the classroom? Why not make them part of tutorials, so that the service is provided to all, and not just those who can attend the sessions outside their timetable slots?

Through this work the Arts+ mentoring programme was born. An innovative method that led to mentors embedded within all stage one courses, and an introduction of week one tutorials that were led by Arts+ mentors.

The results? 100% attendance to week one tutorials, increase in students reporting that they feel well informed, increase in the number of students accessing CANVAS, and an increase in the number of students feeling a sense of belonging.

**Learning outcomes**
- Shifting the focus of mentoring from outside the classroom to inside the classroom
- Equity of service to ensure that it reaches all who attend class
- Working through challenges with academic colleagues – how we overcame these

**Presenters**

Vandana Minhas-Taneja, University of Auckland

Vandana has worked within the tertiary sector for over 10 years. She initially started off working in First Year Experience at AUT University. She then moved onto working at the University of Auckland and has been involved in transition projects both university and faculty wide. She currently Works as a Student Development and Engagement Manager in Faculty of Arts. Part of her role includes initiating projects that enhance the student experience, and has a positive impact on students from all ethnicities and backgrounds.

Chip Matthews, University of Auckland

Chip Matthews has worked in the student engagement space for 5 years. Throughout that time, he has worked in several folios, with an emphasis through these roles on student connection to the University, and helping students find their place within a large and complex space such as the Univerity of Auckland. Over the past couple of years, Chip has worked primarily in the mentoring area of the engagement team. Currently Chip oversees the faculty Tuākana programme, aimed at Māori and Pacific students primarily in stage 1, but offering support in some subjects through to stage 3.

Both Chip and Vandana have worked towards the implementation of the Arts+ mentoring programme which has an emphasis on whanaungatanga as a crucial element in helping new students feel a sense of place as they transition into the next phase of their academic journey.