

Ensuring the Big Splash at Orientation makes Long-Lasting Ripples: Connecting Innovative Practices from Curtin's Retention Plan

Dr. Jim Elliott
Associate Director, Student Relations

Betty Verhelst
START Manager

Ebonee Lynch
Mentor Program Coordinator
Curtin University of Technology

This session will overview how Curtin has taken advantage of technological opportunities and engagement of current students in marketing, delivery and follow-up of our orientation program. Current students are engaged in creating publicity materials in the form of phone clips, video clips and traditional paper publications. Many are also heavily involved in the delivery of the orientation program as student volunteers and as mentors throughout the first semester of study. The session will also address how the typical "information overload" at orientation is supplemented by re-delivery of key information at timely points throughout the semester via the student portal, a regular electronic newsletter and through a course-based inclusive mentor program. Evaluation data will demonstrate the effectiveness of connecting the relatively short term event of orientation with on-going transition support mediated by face-to-face current students and electronic delivery.

Session outline

Brief Introduction: Placing this presentation within the context of Curtin's Retention Plan (1 minute)

Part One: Making the Splash (10 minutes)

- Creative Use of Technology
 - o Example One – Mobile phone clip demonstration
 - o Example Two – Student produced video clip demonstration
- Engaging current students
 - o Booklet and publication design
 - o Engaging volunteers

Part Two: Maintaining the Ripples (10 minutes)

- Engaging current students
 - o The Mentor Program – throughout the semester
- Use of Technology
 - o The Student Portal: StartUp Channel demonstration
 - o The E-Newsletter demonstration

Part Three: Whole group discussion (remaining time)

- Shared discussion on similar initiatives in other universities