Supplementing the core curriculum with co-curricular activity –

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)

Let’s model part of PASS session

- Work in pairs or triplet.  
- Introduce yourselves (1min)

- Create 2 questions on the law of relativity at two levels of the Bloom’s taxonomy (2mins)

- Exchange questions with another group and try answering theirs (2mins).
The main purpose of Peer Assisted Study Sessions

- Support the student learning experience by encouraging collaborative, exploratory discussion in a safe environment
- Assist with transition to University life (pastoral and academic)
- Encourage a student centred approach to learning through greater peer interaction
- Improve academic performance and achievement and increase retention
- Provide an additional mechanism for communication and feedback between teaching staff and students
- Enhance the learning experience and Personal Development of PASS leaders

The PASS Approach – supplementing the core curriculum

- Trained student leaders facilitate study sessions in pairs
  - Quality assured comprehensive, interactive, practical training
  - Not teaching
  - Small group collaborative learning
- PASS is voluntary and confidential
  - Timetabled sessions
  - Safe place to admit not understanding
- Content is based on course materials
  - Students set the session agenda
The PASS Approach – supplementing the core curriculum

- PASS leaders are engaged in:
  - sharing their experience
  - facilitating discussion rather than re-teaching the subject
- PASS encourages fun interaction between year groups
- PASS benefits all students regardless of academic performance
  - Focus on historically challenging concepts
- Students compare notes, clarify what they read and hear, analyse, criticise, question and seek verification of ideas

The University of Manchester’s model summarised:

PASS establishes a supportive environment, enabling deeper conceptual understanding of fundamental academic principles and increasing individual confidence rather than superficial strategic learning to pass exams
Range of approaches

- Content of session
  - Based on whole course
  - Generic module (building blocks)
  - Specific (historically difficult) module

- Structure of session
  - Student led and Agenda based
  - PASS sheet

- Size of scheme
  - 5 leaders to 120 leaders

Effect of PASS on academic performance

- PASS=0, n=45, mean = 45
- PASS=1-3, n=123, mean = 53
- PASS=4+, n=106, mean = 58
- PASS=0, n=53, mean = 57
- PASS=1-3, n=124, mean = 60
- PASS=4+, n=189, mean = 65