

Teaching and Supporting FiF Undergraduate Learners 2

Draw upon existing resources

	Strategies	Some Student Comments
1	Draw upon the knowledge of existing or more advanced students as a means to increase first in family students' understanding of higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Hearing from people who'd been through previously or just gone through was the best way to hear about it and we had this open panel one day that she set up and she said "I couldn't have scripted that better" because there was four of us – a med student, myself, a now-law student and a teacher – all did biomed and she said "I couldn't have scripted it better". (Neil, 23)</i>• <i>You can send off emails but you can't expect replies right away and, you know, it gets a bit confusing after a while so you end up doing what I do which is go and see the older students and go "Well here's my problem. How do I go about fixing it", because nine times out of ten they've had the exact same problem and they did the exact same thing you're doing which is go ask someone else. (Liam, 20)</i>
2	Encourage first in family students to recognise their previous experiences/ education in terms of value not deficit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>...just the feeling of accomplishment; I've done something that I've never done before and I've managed to be successful in what I've wanted to do. I mean I guess yes, so it would definitely be just that whole feeling, that "Oh my God, I've done something" (Asha, 34)</i>• <i>But, I don't think I would have passed as easily as I did having that trade background. I don't think I would have. I don't think I would have lasted to be honest. I don't think I would have got through the degree so it has helped me in that sort of sense but directly, in the subject; some subjects yes, some subjects no. But it's something good to have, you know, it helps you out. (Daniel, 30)</i>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You know, you do your couple of TAFE courses there and I was scared that the academic standard was a lot higher and – well, it is – but I’m not exactly the greatest writer in the world so getting to that point, actually doing a couple of tutorials around just to try and practice getting into the right writing styles was a bit daunting but now I’ve picked it up, I feel quite confident in it. It wasn’t as scary as I thought it was going to be. (Richard, 29)</i> • <i>I feel like I’ve lacked a lot of education where you’re coming in with a lot of kids who come out of really good high schools, private education, they’ve got really good marks, you know, good ATARs and I’m thinking, you know, “Well am I going to struggle? Am I going to keep up with these people” sort of thing. (Daniel, 30)</i>
3	<p>Small gestures make a huge difference!</p>	<p>GOOD...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>my tutor, she was wonderful. She gave incredible feedback. I said I could follow her feedback and each time it would get better. You know, I’d achieve a higher mark and I ended up getting 93%. (Belinda, 31)</i> • <i>Heaps of times I’ve like, I’m in the middle of something and it’s not like the comprehension of anything is never going to be an issue for me but it’s asking me for assignments and reports that involve long periods of sitting down and just getting it done. So yeah, there’s been lots of times where I’d email lecturers or email subject coordinators half way through the subject and basically said “I quit, I’m done. I’m just going to drop this subject and I’d just put an extra 6 months on the university, I don’t care. Whatever, it’s just too much.” I’m crying and pulling my hair out and stuff like that. And then they get back to you and they say, “Take a deep breath. What’s the problem here? I don’t understand.” And then you just explain to them. “Ok, just take an extra week. Come and see me tomorrow and we’ll talk about what your problem is.” So yeah, there’s been heaps of crisis points but I’m just like, I can’t do this, I just can’t. (Graeme, 31)</i> • <i>My prep course tutor was awesome. Really supportive, “You can do it. It’s going to be amazing”, you know, just those sort of things. (Hannah, 33)</i> • <i>At the moment, I feel a little bit awkward just because I’m only new. I know they’re there to help and I know there’s never such thing as a stupid question but I always worry. I have gone up to them; I feel weird putting up my hand at the moment and asking in front of everyone but I have been up to a few lecturers before and just said “Oh, just to confirm, what is this or what is that”? (Isabel, 19)</i> • <i>...my tutor tried to make it really engaging for me and was like “If you come to class and do your homework, bring it into me, I’ll help you and you can wear my pink diamond ring”. I have never seen a diamond ring as big as what this guy had...I’ve never been so successful in a mathematics class other than when I was in accounting. I turned out with a distinction and I was like “How did I do that? No, I did it because I enjoyed my class and I made friends in my class and I had a good tutor”. (Nicole, 21)</i> <p>...AND BAD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I didn’t know who to go to for anything and then when you go and ask they just snap at you... So you can tell that you kind of don’t belong... (Abbey, 22)</i>

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4	<p>Emphasise the importance of social networks to students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I really feel like I don't have that support, I don't have somebody who's saying to me... because in Year 12 I had a mentor and I did really well and it was so good to have somebody to kind of check up on me and push me and believe in me whereas here I just haven't had that. Nobody really cares at all and there was one semester where I failed every single subject that I attempted. I don't drink alcohol anymore so it's not because I was partying. (Nelson, 22)</i> <i>...they had like a speed meet and greet with everyone that lived there and I made all these friends there. I spoke to something like 20 people because every minute they move along and two of them I'm best friends with now which is really good so ever since that second night and still friends with them now which is really good. (Emily, 18)</i> <i>I really relied on [friends] ... like even when I was having a crap day at uni and I didn't see anyone all day, I always knew that I had group dinners to go back to and even if I didn't talk, just to be around other people. Yes, pretty much friendships. (Eric,22)</i>
5	<p>Be explicit about how family, carers etc can be involved in this learning journey – for example sharing the highs and the lows...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I was pretty keen when I got my first HD. I rang my mum and she goes "Are you doing HD dance?" I said "What's the HD dance?" But I was a bit shocked because I got a really high standard for my assessments, like my lowest mark for an assessment is something like 86 or 87... (Emily, 18)</i> <i>I have my boyfriend that I will go home and gloat to...I'll go home and I'll be like "Guess what?" I'll have my little gloat-ey moments when I go home but that's the main one. I don't really gloat to anyone else (Angela, 20)</i> <i>...My dad came with me because ... like they introduced us and they welcomed us and I think my dad going there really went "Yes, you've chosen a good uni" and he felt more confident of me going there, he felt welcomed, he felt like it was a uni that was going to... like want me to learn. (Marlee, 19)</i>