

## **Gaining more than language: reciprocal learning through a peer mentoring scheme**

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### **Abstract**

This paper describes the introduction and evaluation of a six-month peer mentoring scheme at one Australian university. The scheme was initiated with the primary aim of promoting the English language development of staff who have English as an additional language (EAL), a cohort which includes postgraduate students working as tutors. It was anticipated that the main outcome would be a perceived improvement in mentees' English language capabilities; but it was also envisaged that all participants would benefit from the intercultural experience inherent to the scheme. Program evaluations indicated that mentees were satisfied that they had benefited linguistically and that mentors believed that they developed a greater level of intercultural sensitivity and a more empathic understanding of the issues faced by EAL students and staff. The paper concludes by arguing that the approach adopted for the program may be applied in a range of TESOL contexts; not only for language development purposes but also to contribute to the building of intercultural awareness in a non-didactic and experiential way.

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