TAKING CONTROL OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Or Tea Cosy (TCoSE)

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LEADING CHANGE IN GRIFFITH SCIENCES

- A typical research focused STEM culture – mostly oblivious to L&T performance (or that it was measured) – but typical high-achieving professionals…

- Closed-door classrooms

- "Where individuals are stimulated to commit themselves to a goal, and where their personal pride and self-esteem are at stake, then the level of motivation is at a peak. For most people the toughest critic and the hardest taskmaster they confront is not their supervisor but themselves" (Oakland, 2014, p39)

- First step – realisation, education and motivation for staff

- Second step – provide them and lead them to a simple, ‘safe’ way forward
Do you remember the LTPF (2005 – 2010)?

Griffith University implemented a similar scheme (LTPA) using the same metrics to reward faculty success in L&T KPIs

- 4 external metrics (Undergraduate Retention, OSI, GTS, Graduate Success)
- 1 internal metric (Student Experience)

Skimmed 7% from CGS fees from each faculty and redistributed it to faculties according to their relative L&T performance

Used to fund L&T initiatives and interventions and sessional academics → investment in L&T quality

Result? The rich got richer and the poor got poorer!
USABLE INDICATORS OF CHANGE

- Retention measured yearly but significant reporting lag
- AGS data taken twice yearly but reporting lag is also significant
- Student experience was the only item for which data was collected and reported for each teaching period.
  - Quantitative (Likert scale agreement) responses plus qualitative responses where students could elaborate on what worked and what didn't in each unit from their perspectives
- Only indicator for which interventions could be evaluated relatively quickly and percentage agreement with an overall satisfaction statement compared at an institutional and national level
- Only data upon which a responsive ‘quality cycle’ for L&T quality development could be based
End of semester student evaluations often suffer from poor student participation (response rates) which can render student experience data as statistically skewed or lacking significance.

However, students are more likely to participate if they feel that their feedback contributes in a meaningful way. In particular, students must be able to see that the feedback they provide is acted upon by the institution (Nair, Adams, Ferraiuolo, & Curtis, 2006; Nulty, 2008; Nulty & Parer, 1992; Coates, 2006; Porter et al., 2004).
PEER ASSISTED TEACHING SCHEME (PATS) TRIALS

- PATS is a goal oriented, caffeine fuelled, data informed, collaborative process that supports scholarly development of teaching effectiveness.

- We observed that only those teachers/units that engaged with informal student feedback and reported back to them on subsequent changes showed improved student experience evaluations and participation.
FROM PATS TO TCOSE

- Whole of faculty information session / workshop
  - Motivating talk by Dean L&T who related the issues, the consequences and the challenge (defend data, negate pushback, show reality)
  - Deceptively simple process described for academics to follow
  - Final encouragement from Dean L&T for all academics to engage TCoSE

- Follow-up emails to all staff to remind them to execute each of the TCoSE steps at appropriate times of semester

- Extra help for staff with ‘troublesome’ units – DHoS and Director L&T
  - High enrolment (>100) with consistently low SE scores (<3.5/5.0)

- Unit improvement plans – based on SE and TCoSE feedback
Guided engagement
ACTIVITY 1: PAST STUDENT EXPERIENCE
— WHAT DID YOUR STUDENTS TELL YOU?

- Work with a colleague to analyse all qualitative student statements from Unit Report and find most popular issues affecting student experience of learning.
- Use simple method in Constructive Conversations document to guide you through the steps of issue analysis
ACTIVITY 2: PAST STUDENT EXPERIENCE
— WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

- Discuss with a colleague to develop a strategy to address popular issues raised in Activity 1
- Use the Student Experience Issues document to find clues to help with appropriate strategies
ACTIVITY 3: CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE — EVALUATING YOUR INTERVENTIONS (WEEK 4)

- Get feedback from students on their experience of learning so far.
  - Colleague-led focus group or PMI survey or Start-Stop-Continue survey
- See how strategy in Activity 2 worked in terms of addressing previous issues.
- What are the current issues?
- With issues in mind, reflect on how your strategy and approach might be fine-tuned for the rest of the current semester.
- Discuss revised strategy and approach with your colleague
  - Faculty provides the coffee to fuel discussion
ACTIVITY 4: CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE — CLOSING THE LOOP (WEEK 6)

- What changes did you make in response to student feedback in Activity 3?

- Report back to students about the changes that you made to aspects of the course based on their feedback in week 4.
  - If there were things that you can’t change then explain reasons and planned steps

- (Remember to thank them!)
ACTIVITY 5: CURRENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE — RAISING STUDENT AWARENESS (WEEK 10 ONWARDS)

- Find ways to raise the student awareness of the importance of Unit Report surveys
  - Public data
  - Relates to perceived quality and prestige of degree
  - Helps make positive quality change

- Help them to interpret the questions
  - Meaning: What the questions are really asking about
  - Use Student Experience Issues document to help you
Oh yeah!
IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND THE FACULTY

- % Satisfaction (from SEC data)
- Semester, Year
- Griffith Sciences, AEL, GBS, Health
- TCoSE, CIPs, Problematic Courses etc. introduced here
- No reminder re TCoSE & SECs etc. in this semester

Graph showing the percentage satisfaction over the years from 2010 to 2016 for different faculties and departments.
I attended the "taking control of the student experience (TCoSE) workshop".

I have implemented the steps outlined in the TCoSE workshop.

Implementing TCoSE has had a positive impact on my course.

I intend to implement TCoSE as part of my ongoing teaching practice.

Impact on Academics

TCoSE PD

Yes

No
Compared to three years ago I am better able to evidence the quality in my course. Compared to three years ago I employ a more scholarly approach to inform my teaching. Compared to three years ago I am better able to articulate my L&T philosophy. Compared to three years ago I am better able to take control of the student experience. Compared to three years ago I am more aware of the importance of the student experience. Compared to three years ago L&T is considered more important in the Griffith Sciences Group. Compared to three years ago L&T is more valued in the Griffith Sciences Group. Compared to three years ago the L&T culture within Griffith Sciences has improved.
YES, IT IS STILL GOING

- ICT School – highest ranked nationally for student experience
- Engineering, Natural Sciences, Environmental Sciences above national average for student experience
- Process is embedded from education to support to reporting - I received the Week 4 reminder from the Dean L&T at the beginning of semester...
If you would like to know more or if I can be of assistance in getting a process going for you then please contact me

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