

Helping academics in engaging students:

Evaluation of an academic staff development
program

Ursula McGowan, Geoffrey Crisp, Kogi Naidoo
Centre for Learning and Professional Development

*"The University wishes to acknowledge the
Kurna people, the original custodians of
the Adelaide Plains and the land on
which the University of Adelaide's
campuses at North Terrace, Waite,
Thebarton and Roseworthy are built."*

Overview

- Academic Staff Development at University of Adelaide
- Teaching @ University Course evaluation
 - Background information
 - Past participant survey 2002-2007
 - Focus groups with Heads of Schools (November 2007)
- Revision of T@U in response to feedback by past course participants and Heads of Schools

Academic development program

- The University of Adelaide's academic staff development programs
 - Teaching @ University (T@U)
 - annual enrolment: ~40
 - Graduate Certificate of Education (Higher Education)
 - annual enrolment per course: 16
 - four courses taken over 2 years
 - Graduate Certificate in Online Education
 - four courses taken over 2 years
 - Sessional Teacher program
 - Annual enrolment: ~ 150
 - Discipline-based workshops on request (2-3 hrs, gps of 10-25)
- T@U also doubles as the first course in the four-course Graduate Certificate program

Teaching @ University course evaluation

Background Information 1: Requirements

- mandatory for all academics seeking
 - confirmation of tenure or
 - promotion
- course is offered twice each year and consists of 8 x 3 hr hour sessions
- Requirements (2002-2007):
 - Full participation (face to face or online for missed sessions)
 - Microteaching (or peer observation for missed session)
 - Project Proposal
 - Project Progress Report (oral presentation and written report)
 - Learning Reflection (since 2004)

Teaching @ University course evaluation

Background Information - 2: Content

- The course deals with issues, theories and strategies for
 - Large and Small Group Teaching
 - Curriculum for Diversity and Graduate Attributes
 - Assessment
 - Evaluation
 - Online Learning
- Focus on
 - developing a scholarly approach to applying learning theory to teaching practice
 - personal professional development

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007*

1. Information

- Online survey developed
- Invitation to all T@U participants 2002 -2007
 - including those who did not complete the course (eg assignment submission)
- Number of staff invited to participate in the survey ~ 200
 - 14 email return notifications for not delivery
 - 55 surveys were completed (28%)
 - Majority of responses from years 2006-7 (56%) with 38% from years 2003-5

*NB: the data for this section have previously been presented: Crisp & McGowan, 2008, HERDSA Conference, Rotorua, NZ, July

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

1. Information (cont) - Current Position at the University

Position	n	%
Professor	5	9
Senior Lecturer	8	15
Lecturer	23	43
Associate Lecturer	6	11
Professional staff	1	2
Sessional staff	4	7
Other (incl external)	7	13
No response	1	2

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

2. Learning outcomes for participants

That participants develop and/or confirm a student-centred approach to their teaching, to promote student engagement, as evidenced by their:

- (a) use of active learning strategies - eg buzz groups, talk in pairs, mini problems, 'Minute Papers' (Angelo & Cross 1993) in large group teaching (Race 2007)
- (b) use of active learning strategies in small group teaching (Race nd.)
- (c) objectives stated in terms of student learning (Biggs 2003a, b)
- (d) learning objectives that include a range of Graduate Attributes (University of Adelaide 2008; Bloom et al 1956)
- (e) use of MyUni (Blackboard) to increase active participation (eg Discussion Board, online role plays, scenario-based learning, online quizzes) (Crisp 2007)

These outcomes were formulated as survey questions 6a-e:

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

2. Learning outcomes for participants

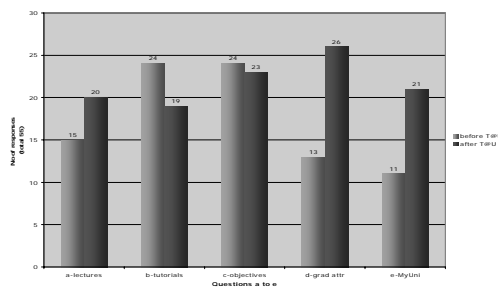
Q6a. In my lectures I make use of 'active learning strategies' (eg buzz groups, talk in pairs, mini problems, 'Minute Papers') to stimulate or maintain student involvement

Response	n	%
Did this before doing <i>Teaching@University</i>	15	27
Have done this since doing <i>T@U</i>	20	36
I am not teaching, but will try this in future	4	7
Am not doing this in my teaching	11	20
Not applicable (not giving lectures)	5	9
No response	0	0

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

2. Learning outcomes for participants

Survey questions a-e



T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

2. Learning outcomes for participants (cont)

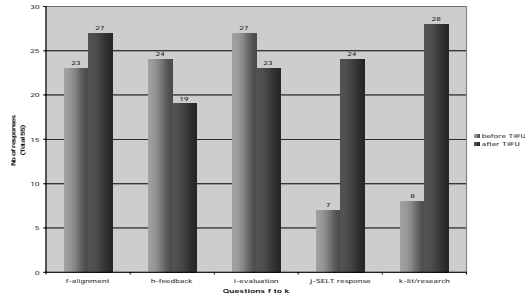
- f) construction of assessment criteria linked to student learning objectives (Biggs 2003b; Ramburuth, P & McCormick, J. 2001)
- h) use of a variety of ways to ensure students receive adequate feedback on their work (assessment rubrics, model answers, online quiz feedback etc) (Crisp, 2007; University of Newcastle, 2008)
- i) use of a variety of formal and informal ways of evaluating the effectiveness of learning and teaching in their courses
- j) feedback to their classes on their SELT responses and comments
- k) use of information on learning and teaching theories and research (available in general or discipline specific higher education journals) in order to improve student learning (Brew 2004)

These outcomes were formulated as survey questions 6f-k:

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

2. Learning outcomes for participants

Survey questions f-k:



The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 13

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

3. Learning outcomes for participants' own students

Q7. Have you noticed any changes in student learning, participation, assessment results, since implementing changes?

Response	n	%
Yes, much improvement	7	13
Yes, some improvement	32	58
No improvement	5	9
Regression	2	4
Not applicable (not teaching)	9	16
No response	0	0

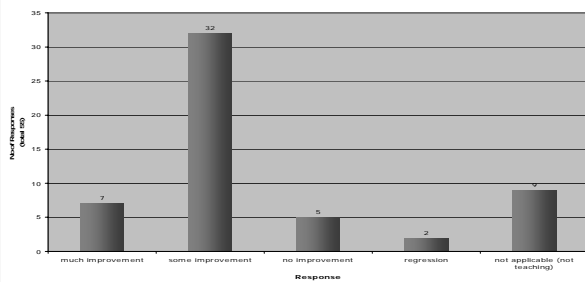
The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 14

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

3. Learning outcomes for participants' own students

Q7. Have you noticed any changes in student learning, participation, assessment results, since implementing changes?



The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 15

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

4. Participant satisfaction

Q5: Did you find T@U useful?

Yes 49 89%
No 6 11%

The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 16

T@U Past participant survey 2002-2007

5. Survey summary: Effectiveness of T@U course (over 6 years) in promoting student engagement

- 'Broad agreement' in the 70, 80 and 90 percentiles on intended learning outcomes of developing or confirming
 - student-centred active learning approaches to teaching
 - inclusion of higher order skills (Blooms taxonomy / Graduate Attributes)
 - constructive alignment of curriculum: objectives, learning tasks, assessment criteria
 - feedback (assessment and evaluation)
 - scholarly approaches to research in learning and teaching
- Limitation
 - 55 responses out of 200 – 6 year span
 - Tighter focus needed

The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 17

Focus groups with Heads of Schools

- Focus groups with heads of schools
 - 2 sessions Nov 7 and 19, 2007
 - Total attendance by heads 14
 - Additional written submissions: 5
- Questions

In relation to the CLPD academic staff development programs

 1. What aspects are working well for your School?
 2. What aspects are not working well for your School?
 3. What else is needed?

The University of Adelaide - CLPD - T@U 2002-07 Evaluation

Slide 18

Focus groups with Heads of Schools

1. Working well for Schools

- T@U
 - Enthusiastic staff (interest in *teaching* as well as *research*)
 - Teaching skills, applying theoretical concepts
 - Teaching-research nexus, evidence-based teaching
 - Contemporary approaches to education / language
 - Some T@U project presented in School / Discipline seminars
 - Networking across disciplines, mentoring, concentrated effort
 - Useful for overseas lecturers, post-docs
- Graduate Certificate
 - Academic leadership, providing information to other staff
 - Positive for international staff, postgraduate students
 - Scholarship of Learning and Teaching: ERGA - founded by a group of Graduate Certificate participants; also *ergo* journal

Focus groups with Heads of Schools

2. Not working well (focus on T@U)

- Large time commitment
- Competing demands of research and teaching
- **Content: 'tips and tricks'** vs 'practice underpinned by theory'

3. Suggested modifications

- Intensive mode; core+options matrix
- **Online, blended approaches**
- **Bring in students, past participants, examples of quality teaching**
- Groups of like interest / discipline specific (involvement by Heads)
- Clinical Titleholders (WA model "Teaching on the run")
- Small group experiences: sessional, HDR supervisor, PhDs

Revision of T@U 2008 in response to the evaluation results

Building on strengths:

- Increase evidence-based approach - Teaching Portfolios
- Increasing requirement of reflective statements

Responding to issues:

- Online approach for greater flexibility
- Content: each session provided with resources for *both*
 - 'tips and tricks' for effective learning and teaching
 - 'practice underpinned by theory' approach
- Greater number of guests (students, lecturers, past participants)
- Pre and post-T@U surveys (for tighter focus, continuing evaluation)
- Encouraging participants' continuing access to T@U online resources (consider course as 'start of a journey')

Revision of T@U 2008 in response to the evaluation results

Summary - Conclusion

Evaluation based on

- Participant survey
- Heads of School input
- CLPD staff reflection on SELTs

Revision performed in 2008

- T@U evaluation and revisions continuing
- Discipline-specific academic staff development available

Questions/ Comments?

References

- Angelo, T. & Cross, B. (1993) Classroom Assessment Techniques. A handbook for college teachers Jossy Bass, San Francisco
- Brew, A (2003) Understanding Research-led Teaching. *HERDSA News* 25(1)1-4
- Biggs, J (2003a) *Teaching for quality learning at university: what the student does*. 2nd edn, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Biggs, J (2003b) *Aligning teaching and assessment to curriculum objectives*. Higher Education Academy, Resources Database, viewed 23 February 2007 http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp?process=full_record§ion=generic&id=154
- Bloom, B., Engelhardt, M., Furst, E., Hill, W., & Krathwohl, D. (1956) *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. David McKay Company, New York.
- CLPD website (2008) <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/resources/assessment/design/> accessed 08/08/08
- Crisp, G (2007) *The e-Assessment Handbook*. Continuum International Publishing Group, New York

References

- Crisp, G. & McGowan, U. 2008, Do University Academic Development Programs make a difference? Perspectives from one Australian University. Engaging Communities. HERDSA Conference, Rotorua, NZ, July
- Race, P (2007) *The lecturer's toolkit: a practical guide to learning, teaching and assessment*. 3rd ed, Routledge, London.
- Ramburuth, P & McCormick, J (2001) Learning diversity in higher education: a comparative study of Asian and Australian students, *Higher Education*, vol. 42, pp. 333-350.
- RSD (Research Skill Development) website (2008) <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/rsd/> accessed 08/08/08
- University of Adelaide (2008) Graduate Attributes <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/dvca/students/gradattributes/>
- University of Newcastle (2008) Rubric templates for student assessment <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/teaching-learning/projects/rubrictemplates>
- Willison & O'Regan (2007) Commonly known, commonly not known, totally unknown: a framework for students becoming researchers. *Higher Education Research and Development* 26(4): 393-409.