Building peer assistance capacity in faculties to improve student satisfaction of units

PEER ASSISTED TEACHING SCHEME (PATS)

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS
BUILDING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNITS

Associate Professor Angela Carbone
Monash University
Presentation Overview

• Teaching and Unit Quality measures in Higher Education

• Quality enhancement process
  – Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS)
  – Implementation of the project
  – Data collection and analysis
  – Future works
Quality Measures

Student Evaluations (National)
Australian Graduate Survey that comprises of two components:
• Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)
• Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)

Student Evaluations (Monash University)
• Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ)
• Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit (SETU) instrument
Student Evaluations of Teaching and Units
-- Unit Evaluation questions

Item 1: The unit enabled me to achieve its learning objectives
Item 2: I found the unit to be intellectually stimulating
Item 3: The learning resources in this unit supported my studies
Item 4: The feedback I received in this unit was helpful
Item 5: Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this unit

Responses use a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) with 3 representing “Neutral”. Options for Not Applicable (6) and Don’t Know (7) are also provided to respondents but are not counted in the means for questions.
# Monash Unit Evaluation Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour Code</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Unit Measure</th>
<th>Characteristics of unit response distribution</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>“overall” item median ≥ 4.7</td>
<td>A considerable majority of responses are “strongly agree”</td>
<td>5% of units have medians ≥ 4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Meeting aspirations</td>
<td>“overall” item median between 3.6 - 4.69</td>
<td>Responses are generally above “neutral”, the great majority are “agree” or “strongly agree”</td>
<td>80% of units fall in this band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Needing improvement</td>
<td>“overall” item median between 3.01 – 3.59</td>
<td>Responses are generally “neutral” or bimodal with no clear trend</td>
<td>10% of units fall in this band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Needing critical attention</td>
<td>“overall” item median ≤ 3.0</td>
<td>Responses generally below “neutral”, majority “disagree” or “strongly disagree”</td>
<td>5% of units have medians ≤ 3.0</td>
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**ACDICT ALTA Forum, University of Adelaide, May 2-3, 2011**

### Notes:
- **Outstanding**: A considerable majority of responses are “strongly agree”.
- **Meeting aspirations**: Responses are generally above “neutral”, the great majority are “agree” or “strongly agree”.
- **Needing improvement**: Responses are generally “neutral” or bimodal with no clear trend.
- **Needing critical attention**: Responses generally below “neutral”, majority “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

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Unit Evaluation Ranking of Faculties at Monash

Faculty of Information Technology

Semester 1 Rankings

• 2008 ranked 9/10 (mean 3.61, Uni 3.79)*
• 2009 ranked 6/10 (median 3.91, Uni 3.94)
• 2010 ranked 7/10 (median 3.93, Uni 3.96)

Semester 2 Rankings

• 2008 ranked 8/10 (mean 3.68, Uni 3.78)*
• 2009 ranked 8/10 (median 3.90, Uni 3.94)
• 2010 ranked 6/10 (median 3.95, Uni 3.99)

* In 2008 only mean values were reported. From 2009 median values were reported as the mean was deemed not an appropriate measure of central tendency.

Faculty Rankings in Semester 2, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>38.84%</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>49.00%</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art &amp; Design</td>
<td>48.89%</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business &amp; Economics</td>
<td>47.69%</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>46.04%</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>53.03%</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>43.73%</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>45.75%</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>30.73%</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>46.60%</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Nursing &amp; Health Sciences</td>
<td>49.37%</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme?

- A program where two or more colleagues collaborate in helping to improve the quality of teaching and student satisfaction within identified units.

- Aims:
  - To improve student satisfaction with the quality of units.
  - To build leadership capacity using currently recognised outstanding teachers as critical friends and mentors.
The PATS Process

**Workshops:**
1. Interactive Lecturing
2. Planning Your Teaching
3. Peer Observation of Teaching

**Deliverables:**
1. Strategy Plan
2. Backchat
3. Peer Observation of Teaching
4. Critical Reflection
Brief

- Prior to semester starting
  - Partnering is established by School/Faculty
  - Introduce the participants to the scheme
  - Focus on improving the health of the unit not teaching
  - Issue coffee vouchers
Step 1: Identifying issues

• Prior to semester starting
  – Partners meet over coffee to discuss and identify 3-4 key issues they wish to improve on over the semester
  – Partners devise strategies to overcome issues
Step 2: Strategies

Outcome: strategy plan

Example of an issue:

1. **Lecturer communication and delivery** - clarity of speech and slide presentation, etc. Including use of filler "umms" and "like"

2. **Information density** - "too many equations" - this seems to mean both too much content being covered, AND that lots of equations are in each section of the content

Example of a strategy:

1. **Lecturer communication** - recording the lectures to hear yourself afterwards

2. **Information density** - by reducing some of the content, spreading out the remaining topics to be less rushed, and making some initial modifications to the slides for clarity/emphasis
Step 3: Informal student feedback and Backchat

1. Discuss how to gather feedback

2. Gather the feedback

3. Discuss feedback with partner

4. Deliver Backchat to students in next class
Step 4: Peer Observation of Teaching

1. BRIEFING SESSION

2. OBSERVATION SESSION

3. POST-OBSERVATION SESSION

4. PRODUCTION OF JOINT STATEMENT

ACDICT ALTA Forum, University of Adelaide, May 2-3, 2011
Step 5: Critical reflection

- After semester concludes
  - Reflect on changes, working with peer, informal student feedback, peer review and final unit evaluation – focussing again on students’ perceptions of units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Scale</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Neutral</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Agree</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>44.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Strongly agree</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>37.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Not applicable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median: 4.22
Mean: 4.16
Debrief

• After semester concludes
  – Participants discuss experience in the process, ways to improve the scheme for future participants, and closure to the scheme
  – Mentees may provide mentoring (building leadership capacity)
Phases of project implementation

• **Pilot study** – implemented in the Faculty of Information Technology (2008-2009)

• **Phase 1** – extended the scheme to the Physical Science cluster of Monash University (FIT, Eng, Sci) (2009-2010)

• **Phase 2** – extended the scheme to all remaining clusters of Monash University (2010-2011)
Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected via three different methods:

• Unit Evaluation results
• Surveyed participants
• Focus Group sessions
# Unit Evaluation Results – The pilot study

Pilot – Faculty of Information Technology 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>#Enr</th>
<th>#Resp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIT1</td>
<td>S2, 2008</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT2</td>
<td>S2, 2008</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT3</td>
<td>S2, 2008</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT4</td>
<td>S2, 2008</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT5*</td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* FIT5 was a new unit taught in 2009; while the lecturer had not taught the unit before he wanted to be involved in PATS because his previous unit was flagged as needing critical attention (Median: 2.95, Mean: 2.83 (112 students enrolled, 29 responses).
# Unit Evaluation Results – Phase 1

## Phase 1 – Physical Science Cluster (IT, ENG, SCI) 2009-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>#Enr</th>
<th>#Resp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIT6</td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT7</td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT8</td>
<td>S1, 2009</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG1</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2, 2010</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG2</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2, 2010</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCI1</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2, 2010</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCI2</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2, 2010</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Moved into needs improvement**
- **Moved into meeting aspirations**
- **Remained in critical attention zone**
Surveys – Areas for improvement

Students commented on the following areas:

• Lectures – content, slides, alignment with tutorials
• Lecturers – presentation, interaction, consultation
• Feedback – insufficient
• Resources – textbooks, guides, notes
• Tutorials – structure, use of time
• Tutors – teaching
• Assessment – specifications, tasks

Ethics approval has been recently obtained to analyse unit evaluation qualitative comments for units needing critical attention
Focus group sessions - PATS in a word

Learning and Teaching Effectiveness

- Reflection
- Accountability
- Relationship-building
- Constructive
- Encouraging
- Review & plan
- Communication
- Interpretative guidance
- Collaborative
- Supportive
- Fostering discussions
- Sharing ideas
Focus group sessions – Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Building leadership/mentoring capacity
- Coffee vouchers to build supportive, collegial relationship with colleagues within faculty
- Places more priority on teaching can lead to improved teaching practice
- Improving quality of higher education, better student experience

Challenges

- Partnering process
- Time consuming
- Feeling stigmatised
- Requires total dedication from both partners to be successful
- More workload
Unit Evaluation Results – Phase 2

Phase 2 – University Wide 2010-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>#Enr</th>
<th>#Resp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ART1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART2</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUS1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU2</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDU3</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT2</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT3</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>NEW UNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHM1</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHM2</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHM3</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>NEW UNIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHM4</td>
<td>S1, 2010</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
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Phase 2 of the scheme is currently in progress with the following faculties participating:

- Arts (4 participants)
- Business and Economics (2 participants)
- Education (6 participants)
- Engineering (2 participants)
- Information Technology (6 participants)
- Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (4 participants)

In 2011, the scheme has been opened up to all faculties at Monash University.
Proposed Outcomes

• A consistent and university-wide strategy/policy to assist academics to improve units that need critical attention
• Identification of perceived challenges and opportunities for the development of PATS as a mechanism to improve quality of teaching in Higher Education
• Improved teaching practice and student experience, and improved unit and course evaluations
• Dissemination of good practice both within and across discipline areas, through wide distribution of reporting and publications
• Embedded acknowledgement
  - in “most improved unit from each cluster” into Monash’s Teaching Excellence Award process
  - development of previous award winners’ and outstanding teachers’ skills
• Embedding the process into the Monash University Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (GCHE)
Future Works

• Development of set of generic resources so scheme can be implemented at other higher education institutions.
• Development of a PATS guide
• Development of a PATS manual/instruction kit
• Building a website to contain all the generic PATS resources (newsletters, one-page flyer, guides, instruction kit)
• Planning workshops across National (ACE 2012, HERDSA 2012, ACDICT 2012)

• **ALTC Teaching Fellowship Symposium**
  Peer Assisted Educational Programs
  Monash University, Tuesday 7th June 2011
We would like to thank the PATS Reference Group for providing critical feedback and support.

External members
Ms Sally Rogan
Ms Katherine Lindsay
Dr Phillip Dawson
Associate Professor Roger Hadgraft
Dr Jane Skalicky
Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith
Associate Professor Susan Edwards

University of Wollongong
The University of Newcastle
Deakin University (Warrnambool)
University of Melbourne
University of Tasmania
Deakin University
Australian Catholic University

Monash University - Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Fellows reference group
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Professor Peter Stewart
Ms Catherine Barrett
Mr Adrian Devey
Ms Lisa Smith

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Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Faculty of Business and Economics
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Monash Library

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Ms Jill French
Dr Yvonne Hodgson
Dr Gerry Rayner

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Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
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• Monash CEQ available online at: http://opq.monash.edu.au/mqu/evaluations/ags/ceq.html