PEER ASSISTED TEACHING SCHEME (PATS)

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS
BUILDING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNITS

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Monash University

RMIT Seminar
Friday 17th June
Building 10 level 8 Room 4
RMIT, City Campus
Presentation Overview

Background
   Education Quality in the Higher Education context
   Quality Measures used within Monash
   Concerns with current methods of improving quality

Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS)
   Aim
   The process and activities
   The implementation
   Data collection and findings
   Proposed Outcomes
   Future works
Background

Advancing Quality in Higher Education

The Australian government has recently introduced the Advancing Quality in HE initiative. Elements of the package include:-

- TEQSA
- Mission-based compacts
- My University website
- Promoting Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Collegiate Learning Assessment
- Australian Graduate Survey (plus others)

Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) comprises of two components:
Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)
Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)

- Analysis main themes/domains of Assessment, Course Design, Outcomes, Staff, Support

- Example: Further improvement for IT is needed in Structure in Course Design and Teaching Skills in staff,

### Student Evaluations (at Monash University)
Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ)
Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit (SETU) instrument
Background

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

Two open-ended questions:
What were the best aspects of the unit?
What aspects of this unit are most in need of improvement?
## Background

### 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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Background
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)

Faculty of Information Technology
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.

<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>
Background
Methods of improving quality

Higher education teacher preparation
Predominant model is via centrally delivered programs

Concerns

• Programs usually do not include discipline specific content
• Programs often neglect the needs of non-early career teaching staff whose units need help
• Not enough support and detailed attention provided
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

Aim

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
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
The original 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
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
-- The revised process

The PATS process

PATS is open to all academics. However, a more formal engagement in the scheme will commence through the normal practice of identifying units within faculties that require improvement and those which have performed at the high-end of meeting aspirations or outstandingly.

Refining pre semester activities

Refining post semester activities
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

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 was collected via three different methods:

- Unit Evaluation results
- Surveyed participants
- Focus Group sessions with mentees and mentors
## Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

### Unit Evaluation Results - The pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>#Enr</th>
<th>#Res</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).
## Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

### Unit Evaluation Results - Phase 1

<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>16</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>ENG 1</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>ENG 2</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>2.00</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>3.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2, 2010</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCI2</td>
<td>S2, 2009</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Moved into meeting aspirations

Moved into needs improvement

Remained in critical attention zone

ALTC Teaching Fellowship Presentation RMIT Seminar 17
June 2011
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
Surveys - Areas for improvement

Students commented on the following areas:

**Lectures** - relevance, structure,
**Lecturers** - teaching skills, accessibility, expertise/knowledge
**Feedback** - amount, relevance, timing
**Resources** - relevance, amount, LMS
**Assessment** - specifications/requirements, types of tasks, alignment with lecture content
**Tutorials** - relevance, structure/use of time, alignment with lecture content
**Tutors** - teaching skills, accessibility, expertise/knowledge

Ethics approval has been recently obtained to analyse unit evaluation qualitative comments for units needing critical attention
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

Focus group sessions - PATS in a word
Focus group sessions
- Opportunities and Challenges

**Positives and Negatives**

**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

**ALTC Teaching Fellowship Presentation RMIT Seminar 17 June 2011**
## 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>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
- 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)
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
-- Future Works

Development of set of generic resources so scheme can be implemented at other higher education institutions.
Analysis of unit evaluation qualitative data for units to provide advice to DVCs on how to improve low-performing units.
Development of a PATS online instruction booklet for participants
Building a website to contain all the generic PATS resources (newsletters, one-page flyer, guides, instruction kit, access to references, meeting agendas/minutes)
Conduct a series of workshops to disseminate the PATS scheme beyond Monash University in 2012.
# Acknowledgements

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

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**The University of Newcastle**

**Deakin University (Warrnambool)**

**University of Melbourne**

**University of Tasmania**

**Deakin University**

**Australian Catholic University**

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**Monash University - Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Fellows reference group**

Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington  
Professor Peter Stewart  
Ms Catherine Barrett  
Mr Adrian Devey  
Ms Lisa Smith

**Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)**

**Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences**

**Faculty of Business and Economics**

**Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)**

**Monash Library**

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**2010 Monash PAL Fellows**

Dr Jane Bone  
Ms Jill French  
Dr Yvonne Hodgson  
Dr Gerry Rayner

**Faculty of Education**

**Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences**

**Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences**

**Faculty of Science**

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References


