Student engagement

measuring and enhancing engagement with learning

Proceedings of a Symposium

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held on Monday and Tuesday 27 and 28 March 2006

at the Frederic Wallis House Conference Centre
Lower Hutt
New Zealand

Edited by John M Jennings and Tom Angelo

Student engagement: measuring and enhancing engagement with learning

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Measuring student engagement in learning: promoting shared responsibility for quality outcomes
A call for leadership

Introduction

This statement is a call for leadership on a critical topic at a key moment in the development of New Zealand tertiary education. It argues for a significant, positive change in direction regarding the measurement of quality. It is addressed to the leaders of New Zealand's tertiary education institutions, the Vice-Chancellors, Chief Executives, managers of institutions, the directors of peak bodies, as well as to the opinion leaders among the academic staff. This statement on student engagement aims to engage those academic leaders in productive discussions with their colleagues and with relevant officials from the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

The statement aligns with the Minister of Tertiary Education's recent call for better measures of quality and relevance for learners. Specifically, it proposes that the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission focus on student *engagement in learning* rather than on student satisfaction as a third key performance quality indicator, alongside measures of completion and retention. The statement also proposes that the Minister convenes a Working Group to progress this project.

This statement is one outcome of the national Symposium on *Measuring and enhancing engagement with learning*, held in Lower Hutt on 27 and 28 March 2006, involving fifty-three representatives from across the tertiary sector who have contributed to the development of this statement. The participants acknowledged the need to raise the awareness level about student engagement, to define engagement, to clarify the purposes of engagement, and to capture the dimensions of engagement. There is a need to make the concept of student engagement better known across the tertiary sector so that it can be worked on in a positive fashion. The participants felt strongly that a statement, offering a recommendation arising from the Symposium, should be developed along with the record of the proceedings.

The published *Proceedings* of the Symposium is available as a pdf on **http://www.aau.ac.nz**.

Defining *Engagement in Learning*

Measures of student satisfaction, such as the proposed Learner Opinion Survey, encourage students to view themselves as passive consumers of tertiary education, rather than as active, responsible participants. Satisfaction measures also risk promoting a 'qualifications for dollars' entitlement mentality. Student *engagement measures,* on the other hand, encourage recognition of shared responsibility for learning and appreciation of the complex, powerful relationship between quantity and quality of student time and effort invested and quality of learning outcomes achieved.

In his Symposium plenary on 27 March, Dr Hamish Coates, Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Council on Education Research, defined engagement as 'an individual's involvement with the educationally relevant activities and conditions that are instrumental to their learning'.

While it is what the individual learner does that matters most, what academic staff and tertiary education institutions do is also critical to promoting and enhancing student engagement in learning. Focusing on student engagement is, however, a means to an end. The end, or goal, must be improved student learning and achievement. Thus, there is a necessarily shared responsibility – amongst students, staff, managers, and policy makers – for achieving high quality, relevant and lasting learning outcomes

In the research literature, *engagement in learning* typically refers to the amount, type, and intensity of investment students make in their educational experiences. On the face of it, the basic concept is simple: in general, the more time and effort students devote to and the more deeply engaged they are in activities that promote learning, the more and better they learn and the more likely they are to persist and succeed. A key finding from the wide and deep research on engagement is that, in terms of learning outcomes, what students actually *do* during their educational careers is more important than who they *are* or which institution they attend.

Measuring *Engagement in Learning*

In practice, measures of engagement in learning tend to focus on the quantity *and* quality of student engagement in those 'educationally relevant activities and conditions.' While there are many ways to study engagement in learning, data is typically gathered through survey questionnaires. The quantity of student engagement may be gauged through questions on the amount of time spent studying at home, in the library, or working in the laboratory, the number of books read and essays written, or the number of times one has sought out academic advice. Quantitative engagement measures also focus on factors that impact on learning, such as the number of hours spent on childcare, work for pay, or activities in support of the whanau or community. Qualitative engagement measures, on the other hand, may focus on the perceived value of activities, assessments and feedback provided, or the usefulness of learning support services and educational technologies in promoting learning.

Student engagement in learning is a concept well-grounded in theory, well-supported by several decades of international research, well-tested in international practice, and well-suited to promote quality assurance and quality improvement within the New Zealand tertiary sector. Engagement measures have the great advantage of focusing attention on specific learning and teaching activities and conditions that can be evaluated, changed if need be, and re-evaluated again to see if the changes made actually led to improvement.

While survey instruments to measure student engagement in learning have been developed, used, and thoroughly researched in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, the Symposium participants felt strongly that none of these existing questionnaires could or should be adopted wholesale. Rather, initiatives in student engagement activities must reflect the New Zealand context, the diversity of institutions and students, the diversity of approaches to teaching and learning including Māori and Pacific models. The emphasis must be on 'whole person' education – education for life, citizenship and skills that students will transfer into the economic and social context outside the institution.

Developing *Engagement in Learning* measures for New Zealand

Participants in the March Symposium urge the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission to focus efforts on developing, or perhaps adapting, measures of student engagement in learning to the specific needs of New Zealand tertiary education. They are

absolutely confident that the sector contains sufficient skill, expertise, and leadership to accomplish this task within a reasonable timeframe if direction is set, leadership provided, and adequate resources made available.

To develop and progress the measurement of student engagement in learning will require:

- *consultation* around appropriate research with a New Zealand focus;
- the development of relevant *case studies* to illustrate different models and practices;
- the development of a *data management framework* which communicates 'results' in ways that institutions find useful in informing improvement; and
- strategies for *adapting and embedding* concepts and practical elements of engagement into the local cultures of teaching and learning.

Specifically, this will require strategies and support for:

- engaging staff,
- motivating staff and students,
- providing professional development and
- support and managing ongoing evaluation.

Such a development process should encourage close collaboration among tertiary institutions, providing the opportunity to learn with and from each other. One option is to have each institution measure student engagement as part of its existing quality assurance processes.

Developing the relevant policies, procedures, questions, survey instrument(s), analytic models and communication plans will require engaged consultation and shared responsibility amongst a wide range of stakeholders. Thanks to the work of the Teaching Matters Forum and other related Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission and professional initiatives, effective networks and proposals are already in place that could support this project.

The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, for example, could play an important role by putting student engagement high on its initial agenda. The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence could provide:

- leadership and co-ordination;
- research into student engagement;
- support for the development of appropriate measures, advice and networking links; and
- summaries of effective and contextualized best practice.

Next steps

The Minister is encouraged to convene a Working Group, possibly including members of the Technical Working Group for the Learner Opinion Survey and the Teaching Matters Forum, to develop policies and implementation plans focused on fostering and measuring student engagement in learning. Student academic achievement, retention and completion are also significant indicators of institutional effectiveness in tertiary education. But given that research has demonstrated positive relationships between student engagement in learning and these significant institutional effectiveness indicators, the initiative proposed above promises good returns on investment for individual Tertiary Education Organisations and for New Zealand's future.

Preface

The origins of the Symposium

This Symposium arose from a challenge made by Hamish Coates in an article published in 2005[1] in which he observed that quality assurance agencies consider inputs (such as preparedness of students, quality of staff, resources, on-line support) and outputs (such as number of graduates, grade profiles, completions and retentions, student satisfaction) but not the state of engagement of students in their own learning. This challenge was timely given the greater awareness today that the link between teaching and learning is the engagement of teachers *and* learners with information, skills and concepts, thus creating knowledge and understanding. To enhance learning, we should look to ways of enhancing the engagement of teachers and students in the learning process.

The idea that quality assurance agencies should measure student engagement led to a discussion among New Zealand national educational quality assurance bodies. Arising from this was strong support for a Symposium which would place a number of independent initiatives in New Zealand in the area of the student learning experience within a framework of measuring and enhancing the engagement of students with their own learning. With respect to the measurement of student engagement, there is already a model in operation in the school sector – the indicators of student engagement developed and implemented by the Education Review Office. Maybe the tertiary sector could learn from this?

The Symposium was about three things:

- the responsibility of institutions to support students engage with their own learning;

- the way students take responsibility for themselves, the way students take advantage of the opportunities offered by teachers, by the interaction with peers, by the use of new learning technologies to assist them engage with the processes associated with their own learning so as to give them the best chance to succeed; and

- the way we can apply this knowledge about student engagement with learning to support teachers in the design and delivery of curriculum.

The aims of the Symposium

The aims of the Symposium were:

- to weave together conversations taking place in different areas across New Zealand around the core educational idea of 'student engagement' which will provide ideas for progressing work on engagement which will help institutional support for students' learning;

- to relate New Zealand initiatives to international practice and understanding of student engagement;

- to apply the knowledge gained about student learning to curriculum and to the enhancement of the student learning experience;

- to explore how these initiatives might be applied to quality assurance processes.

The intention of the two-day meeting was:

- to stimulate ongoing action in activities related to this area with participants involved in discussion, either as a whole group, or in smaller break-out groups as appropriate; and

- to facilitate networking so that participants benefit from participation, carry on the discussion beyond the Symposium, apply what they learn to practice, and develop new projects in this area.

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[1] Hamish Coates, The value of student engagement for higher education quality assurance, *Quality in Higher Education*, v.11, n.1, 2005, p.25-36.

To assist our thinking and discussions, two facilitators from Australia who are active in research into the student learning experience and in the measurement of student engagement, accepted our invitation. They were:

- Professor **Richard James**, Director, the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne; and

- Dr **Hamish Coates**, Senior Research Fellow, the Australian Council for Educational Research.

The organisation of the Symposium

The Symposium was organised by an organising group drawn from across the tertiary sector.

Jan Osborn	ITP New Zealand
Colleen Slagter	Ministry of Education
Joey Randall	New Zealand University Students' Association
Janet Calder	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Val Jolly	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
John Jennings	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
Belinda Middleton	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
Lesley Campbell	Tertiary Education Commission
Tom Angelo	Victoria University of Wellington

The proceedings of the Symposium

This proceedings includes:

- a call for leadership in developing policies and implementation plans focused on fostering and measuring student engagement in learning,

- pre-Symposium background papers,

- reports on the presentations and discussions at the Symposium, developed from notes taken by Angela Sheehan (stenographer), from powerpoints used by presenters, from notes supplied by chairs of parallel presentations, and from notes supplied by reporters of parallel workshops.,

- a list of participants.

Acknowledgements

The editors acknowledge the contribution of all participants to the debates and discussions during the two-day Symposium. Of special mention are those who presented papers, who acted as facilitators, who led discussion groups, and who reported back to plenary sessions. Their contributions were essential factors in ensuring the Symposium was focused and inclusive.

The editors thank the many participants who commented on the draft of this publication and who provided valued feedback and input into the proceedings and the 'call for leadership' statement. The assistance of Warren Sellers, Research Assistant, University Teaching Development Centre, Victoria University of Wellington in proofreading the final draft is gratefully acknowledged.

The Symposium marks the beginning of what must become an ongoing discussion on student engagement with learning. The Symposium was successful only because of the generous spirit and enthusiastic participation by all those who attended. Ways must be found to build on this enthusiasm and momentum.

John M Jennings
Tom Angelo

Wellington, 30 June 2006

Contents

Measuring student engagement in learning:
promoting shared responsibility for quality outcomes - a call for leadership

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Tuesday 28 March 2006: Engagement in action

Monday 27 March 2006

Contexts and possibilities of engagement

> *The aim of this day was to:*
>
> - *expose, contextualise and critically review existing and possible practice surrounding the analysis of student engagement – a kind of policy-level 'possibilities and needs analysis';*
> - *identify pertinent aspects of the New Zealand context;*
> - *evaluate current New Zealand initiatives in the light of research-driven understandings of student engagement and international trends.*

The Context

Plenary discussion, led by
Richard James, *Centre for Studies in Higher Education, University of Melbourne*
Hamish Coates, *Australian Council for Educational Research*

Explore issues, policies and practices in the current New Zealand context; consider possible and feasible responses to the question 'How should measures of student engagement be factored into conceptions of quality in New Zealand higher education?'

NOTES FROM THE PRESENTATION

We need to begin by considering the alternative approaches to evaluating the quality of learning/teaching in higher education, the opportunities for measurement, the possible instruments for doing that measurement, and some of the possibilities and limitations.

Direct assessment of student learning or students' self-reports of their learning (outcomes)

Examples:

- *Graduate Skills Assessment* (GSA)
  This instrument is a multiple choice test that purports to measure certain generic skills such as problem-solving, verbal communication, and written communication.

- *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) *Generic Skills Scale*
  This instrument asks students a series of questions about whether they felt their programmes advanced their skills in those areas – in other words, students' self-reports on their perceptions of their development. Beyond generic skills, there is the problem of incommensurable curricula.

The problem with direct assessment of student learning is that it does not migrate well across the disciplinary fields. It makes it very difficult to get points of comparison about the quality of student experience and student learning.

Measurement of teacher 'behaviours' or institutional 'provision' (inputs or processes)

This can be highly superficial ('student satisfaction') and there can be no guarantee of a direct link with learning.

Measurement of students' perceptions of the learning environment (processes, inferring outcomes)

The *Course Experience Questionnaire* (CEQ) purports to measure student perception of the learning environment. If the modelling is correct, this approach has potential. One criticism of the CEQ is that it touches only on what happens in the classroom; it does not get into what students do beyond the classroom.

Measurement of students' 'behaviours' (processes, inferring outcomes)

Measurement of student behaviours includes the measurement of student study habits and student engagement instruments.

Behaviours are a key component in the measuring and enhancing of student learning, the argument being that what the students are doing is what really counts and what we should tap into, and that we can infer learning outcomes from student behaviours. It should be noted, however, that outcomes are not only at the end of the tertiary education process but also along the way. A good experience may well have value in its own right.

There are three core considerations in 'measuring' the quality of teaching and learning:

Theoretical/Pedagogical	What ought to be measured?
Empirical/Psychometric	Just how well are we able to measure this? What are the present empirical limitations?
Political/Pedagogical	How can the data be best used for the benefit of various stakehlolders? For students and prospective students? For management? For academics? For professional or organizational development? How might misinterpretation/misuse of the data be limited?

The big question is 'How might measures of student engagement be factored into conceptions of quality?'

DISCUSSION

Question Why the emphasis on behaviours? Why not include attitudes?

Answer It was an attempt to avoid the word 'engagement' at this stage.

Question Where in there do you see the issues of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning?

Answer The first three instruments do not focus on the student as the unit of analysis, so it will have to fall into the fourth one in terms of looking at the student as a person. Consider the extent to which we as institutions and individual teachers within them can influence student motives. There is an argument that says if we are going to use this for quality assurance purposes we should put in here the territory over which we have major control. We are not personally putting that argument forward, but that is how the logic would go.

Comment The relationship we are talking about is an incredibly complex one and to talk about cause and effect is very simplistic, and the whole issue of quality assurance around this is very complex.

ACTIVITY

Thinking of the New Zealand context, we might ask:

• What are the core issues, policies and practices associated with the measurement and enhancement of student engagement that might be discussed during the Symposium?

• What do we all hope we will be able to achieve during the next two days?

At this point, participants broke into groups to discuss these questions, with the following results.

What are the main issues to be addressed and discussed during the Symposium?

- How to get buy-in from students.

- How to shift institutional culture to include a focus on engagement.

- Exploration of measurement/methodological issues.

- An understanding of what to measure – relevance to students, not being led by what is easy to measure.

- How to use survey data in efficient ways.

- Consideration of qualitative versus quantitative tools.

- The merits of formative versus summative approaches (improvement versus excellence).

- Identification of stakeholders, and different/diverse student stakeholders in particular.

- Importance of Māori and indigenous perspectives.

- How data can be contextualized.

- What are the reliabilities of student perception data?

- Are the purposes and uses made of data 'internal' and 'external'?

What do we hope will be achieved during the next two days?

- An understanding of what to measure, common ground on a definition of student engagement.

- Identification of the contextual constraints of engagement data.

- Insights into how to use engagement data, clarity on what engagement data will be used for.

- Sharpening of current practice, identification of practices to avoid.

- How to sustain an active learning community surrounding engagement.

Student engagement

The specification and measurement of student engagement

Plenary presentation and discussion, led by **Hamish Coates**

A discussion of background materials centred on theories and perspectives on student engagement – definition of key terms, consideration of measurement possibilities, provision of an informed but policy-neutral perspective for generating developments.

BACKGROUND PAPER

The idea of 'student engagement'

'Student engagement' is concerned with the point of intersection between individuals and the things that are critical for their learning. The idea is intended to provide a singularly sufficient means of capturing the broad range of educationally significant interactions that learners have with their study, teachers and institutions.

The idea is not new to education, but it has changed over time. While earlier more behavioural work emphasised 'time-on-task' or 'academic learning time', contemporary interpretations focus on cognitive and affective as well as behavioural phenomena. For current purposes, student engagement can be defined as an individual's involvement with the educationally relevant activities and conditions that are instrumental to their learning.

Individual learners tend to be the agents in discussions of engagement, and primary focus is directed towards understanding educational processes and contexts from the learner's perspective. The idea is underpinned by the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Instructivism also plays a part, as institutions and staff are responsible for providing students with the conditions and opportunities to become involved.

Antecedents to work on student engagement

Student engagement was developed, in part, to challenge conceptions of educational quality:

- While often used as proxies, measures of institutional resources and reputations provide inadequate and inappropriate representations of educational quality.

- Measures which focus on teaching alone can provide significant although insufficient indices of the quality of education.

- Summary measures of student input factors may have little relation to university education, are confounded by demographic and contextual factors, are rarely adjusted to derive value-added measures, and say nothing about the contribution of the current institution to a student's academic performance.

- Learning outcomes can be difficult to specify, measure, generalise and interpret.

Student engagement also emerged from sustained research into higher education student learning and development. In its current expression, the idea can be traced to three key antecedents: Pace's (1979, 1995) 'quality of effort' idea; Chickering and Gamson's (1987) work to document good practices of undergraduate education; and Astin's (1979, 1985, 1993) 'involvement principle'. The work of Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005), Tinto (1993), Ewell and Jones (1993, 1996), and Kuh, Schuh and Whitt (1991) has distilled research into student learning and development emphasised the importance of examining students' integration into institutional life, outlined the warrant and nature of process indicators, and developed insight into educationally relevant beyond-class experiences.

The significance of student engagement

- Measures of student engagement provide information about individuals' intrinsic involvement with their learning, and the extent to which learners are using educational opportunities to develop their talent.

- Assessing students' engagement in key educational processes provides an indirect measure of educational outcomes. This is useful, because it can be difficult to specify, measure and interpret the outcomes of higher education in ways that are generalisable and policy-relevant.

- Student engagement measures provide direct and coincident information about students' involvement in key educational processes. Such data can be used to evaluate and manage the quality, nature, levels and targeting of resource provision.

- Factoring measures of student engagement into quality assurance procedures provides a means of incorporating findings from decades of higher education research into systemic and institutional policies and practices.

- The perspective on engagement can help focus considerations of the quality and efficiency of university education on student learning, and counterbalance information about student input, pedagogical or institutional factors.

- Student engagement measures cut across a number of entrenched theoretical or bureaucratic distinctions to reflect the wide range of educationally meaningful interactions that learners have with their universities.

Approaches for measuring student engagement

Student engagement is a complex psychosociological phenomenon that can be measured in many different ways.

- Subtle measures can be obtained through direct naturalistic observation of participants. Such fieldwork, however, can be highly intrusive, behaviourally-focused, resource demanding and difficult to generalise. University students learn in many different contexts.

- Administrative data can be used to obtain broad information about students' involvement with learning. While such data might be easily sourced from information systems or attendance records, it makes assumptions about the behavioural nature of academic learning which might be difficult to sustain.

- Time or activity diaries can be completed by sampled students. Such diaries offer a means of gathering rich longitudinal type data from students, although they also place heavy demands on participants.

- Interviews and focus groups can provide a means of developing rich insight into student engagement, but are expensive, difficult to standardise, and can provide unrepresentative information.

- Questionnaires are an extremely common means of collecting feedback from higher education students, and are a relatively unobtrusive, inexpensive and easy means of gathering valid, rich, and representative data.

Instruments that measure engagement

A range of survey instruments have been designed to measure various aspects of student engagement:

- The *College Student Report* (www.nsse.iub.edu) is used in the USA to measure five dimensions of engagement.

- The *Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ)* (coatesh@acer.edu.au) has been validated to measure online and general engagement.

- Select items in the *First Year Experience Questionnaire (FYEQ)* (www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au) measure aspects of engagement in the first year.

- Selected scales in the *Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)* (www.graduatecareers.com.au) measure coursework students' perceptions of teaching.

- Certain scales in the *Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ)* (www.graduatecareers.com.au) measure research students' perceptions of their study.

- The *College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)* (www.indiana.edu/~cseq) measures the quality of effort students expend in using institutional resources and opportunities to learn and develop.

- Select scales in the *College Student Survey (CSS)* (www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/heri.html) provide measurement of academic engagement, student involvement and resource use.

- Numerous institutions around the world have developed in-house instruments to measure strategically relevant aspects of the student experience.

Opportunities to enhance student engagement

- Produce resources to help students learn about engagement.
- Find ways to generate students' reflection on their study.
- Expose learners to lists of engagement activities.
- Legitimate each student within university learning communities.
- Take student feedback seriously.
- Engineer educationally focused interactions between students and faculty into the fabric of institutional practice.
- Infuse ideas about student engagement into strategic plans.
- Weave evaluations of student engagement into cycles of institutional evaluation and research.
- Link engagement data with data in administrative systems.
- Benchmark engagement within the institution and between institutions.
- Have institutions take part in broader regional, sectoral, national and international conversations about engagement.
- Conduct exploratory and investigative studies of student engagement.
- Highlight online learning management technologies as sophisticated systems for learning and engagement.
- Document, disseminate and promote ideas and discussions about engagement.
- Transform passive engagement into other more productive styles of interaction with learning.
- Infuse the idea of 'student engagement' into both formal and colloquial discussions about teaching.
- Weave measures of student engagement into conversations about educational quality.
- Generate interest groups around the idea of student engagement.
- Develop the capacity of teaching staff to enhance engagement.
- Enhance curricula and assessments.
- Use measures of engagement to complement measures of academic performance.
- Blend engagement measures into routine assessment.
- Develop distributed learning spaces around campus.

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SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Why change from measuring student experience to student engagement?

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) has evolved over thirty years, and there is now a lot of policy emphasis on it given the $104 million worth of expenditure. Hamish had been involved recently in a project to redesign it completely so as to achieve an index of key aspects of learning quality. In doing that it was important to form a distinction between student engagement and student experience.

When exploring student engagement, there are questions to be asked.

- Why take the 'engagement' approach?

- How can we factor 'insights' into student engagement into quality assurance?

- Why is student engagement information not *implicit* in quality assurance?

- Who *defines* the educationally relevant ways in which students interact with universities?

- Who *benefits* from evidence-based understandings of engagement?

- What *value* could engagement insights add to higher education?

- How can New Zealand best add to and benefit from work in this area?

The idea of engagement as a development manifested in the l990s (Astin 1993).[2] Main characteristics of the idea of student engagement are as follows.

- Individuals learn through behavioural, cognitive and affective involvement with key educational practice.

- People learn when staff and institutions provide supports likely to encourage involvement.

- Student engagement is a specific idea which encompasses a broad range of relevant academic and non-academic phenomena.

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[2] See references to the background paper.

- Measures of engagement provide an index of whether students are engaging with university study in ways likely to generate high quality learning.

- Student engagement is not 'satisfaction', not 'retention', not only or primarily the evaluation of pedagogy, not an attitudinal/opinion survey, and not student experience.

Other important principles are the quality of the effort the student was putting into study (Pace 1979, 1995), and integration into institutions and departure from institutions (Tinto 1993). Also important is the rich history of large-scale empirical work (identified through the work of Pascarella and Terenzini 1991, 2005) on how student engagement in particular aspects of learning and university experiences leads to various outcomes.

Engagement offers a varied and consistent measure of educational quality to enable factors to be identified and used. It also offers proxy measures for learning outcomes. It offers a good way of understanding how to manage students, particularly as there are so many competing forces on their time. In the United States in particular, a lot of politics is associated with measurement within universities, but there has been a move to use the engagement perspective as an egalitarian measure of learning quality. In Australia there is a diversity of opinion amongst the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee with regard to whether or not national measurement should take place – the institutions with high reputations are nervous about it, whereas the developing universities want hard data to show how value is added.

There is a lot to be learned from the school level in terms of teaching in particular. Student entry scores have a very low relationship to student performance in universities. A student who performs well in the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) would find that new skills and attitudes are required at university. One can be sceptical about using progression measures on an individual basis. However, if a university or other institution is not retaining students on a large-scale aggregate level, then it is reasonable to assume this indicates something about the educational and social processes of that institution.

Outcomes are incredibly hard to measure in higher education. They are almost subject-specific. Therefore ranking occurs, but if 5 percent of students always get a 'first', it is hard to make anything of that.

Engagement gives a measure of how intrinsically involved students are with their study and enables students to be questioned about why they are not putting in more time and effort. Engagement puts the word 'student' on the Vice-Chancellor's table. It brings students out as the most important stakeholder in the whole educational process. Engagement picks up a whole range of phenomena and gives a dashboard picture of various parts of university education.

The significance of engagement is as follows.

- Engagement reflects students' intrinsic involvement with study.

- Engagement is a generalisable indirect measure of educational outcomes.

- Engagement is a direct measure of involvement in key processes.

- Engagement focuses quality considerations on student learning.

- Engagement reflects the wide range of educationally meaningful interactions that students have with their institutions.

- Engagement is a coincident measure of student activities that can be used to evaluate and manage the quality of higher education.

The data currently being analysed for the CEQ had been collected in April 2005 from people who had graduated in November 2004 and who had started university as early as 2001. Assuming that data would be published later this year, that was a six-year lag. By contrast, a commercial firm will commission market research and use that to understand directly what is going on and to manage and improve without delay.

9

What are the parameters of student engagement?

The qualities of student engagement are:

- constructive nature of teaching,
- supportive learning environment,
- teacher approachability,
- student and staff interaction,
- academic challenge,
- active learning,
- complimentary activities,
- collaborative work,
- beyond class collaboration,
- on-line forms of engagement.

The four styles of engagement are:

- collaborative,
- intense,
- passive,
- independent.

At this point in the presentation, participants broke into groups to debate and answer the following two questions:

- *How can information on student engagement best enhance higher education?*
- *What main value do ideas about student engagement add to higher education quality assurance?*

Notes from the participants were given to the facilitators who analysed them to produce relevant materials on Day 2 of the Symposium.

What needs to be considered when measuring engagement?

On the issue of the measurement of engagement, a fair question to ask is whether the student who looks at the internet 500 times is more engaged than the person who looks at it once. There is still a lot of work to be done in that regard. Karen Gage, head of marketing for WebCT, is very interested in developing measures of how students engage with online learning. It is important that educationists are helping her develop those systems.

Some broad approaches to measuring engagement include:

- one-to-one interaction,
- direct naturalistic observation,
- administrative data,
- time or activity diaries,
- interviews and focus groups,
- questionnaires and surveys.

There is value in advising people to call a few students together and get an independent person to talk to them about what is going on.

In measuring engagement, the following considerations should be kept in mind.

- Face validity/simplicity/transparency.
- Sufficiency/coverage of the content domain.
- Relationship to underpinning construct.
- Relationship to alternative measures.
- Prediction of quality outcomes.
- Stability across groups.
- Data integrity and auditability.
- Reliability and the errors of measurement.
- Normative or criterion referenced measurement.

Unless these are taken into account, the results would be not worthwhile, even at large-scale levels.

When measuring engagement, it is important also to remember other factors.

- There are vast attitudinal differences between mature-aged students and school leavers.
- Data integrity is essential. There are ways of finding out whether people are fiddling the figures.
- Not a lot of bias is caused by non-response.
- Money is now being linked to the results of the data. Some corruption is creeping into the data collection, particularly through telephone surveys. Telephone calls are a lot less traceable than pieces of paper.

The practical considerations when measuring student engagement are:

- survey management,
- a centralised or decentralised model, or any survey model at all,
- scope and cost,
- capacity of people in the institutions to do the work,
- the level of institutional research capacity,
- the level of buy-in by senior university administrators and executives,
- how to decide what will be measured,
- what was the population,
- census or sample,
- how to monitor it and manage the data,
- reporting dissemination.

At this point, examples of student experience and student engagement measurement instruments were handed out and briefly spoken to.

It should be pointed out that there is a sense of data fatigue at university level. The University of Melbourne, for example, is undertaking an analysis of the quality data it has collected, and has noticed

that people are now keen to look at the quality data ahead of the quantitative data, probably looking for some predictability in the patterns in the quantitative data. This is regarded as a healthy trend.

The student *experience* instruments are:

- College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ)
- College Student Expectations Questionnaire (CSXQ)
- College Student Survey (CSS)
- Freshman Survey (FS)
- Your First College Year (YFCY)
- First Year Experience Questionnaire (FYEQ)
- Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ)
- National Student Survey (NSS)
- Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ)

The student *engagement* instruments were:

- College Student Report (CSR)
- Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ)
- CEQuery

International trends

Some observations on the Australian experience of the national Course Experience Questionnaire survey and the national Learning and Teaching Performance Fund

Plenary presentation and discussion, led by **Richard James**

The current state of play regarding engagement and student experience research: what is the value of current activities for institution, curriculum pedagogy, learners?

BACKGROUND PAPER

Course Experience Questionnaire survey

Since 1993, undergraduates from all Australian universities have been surveyed in the year following completion using the Course Experience Questionnaire. The survey is undertaken through an agreement between the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) and the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). Individual universities administer the survey and Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) reports the data. The AVCC and GCA have published a Code of Practice that provides guidelines for the interpretation of survey data as well as the public disclosure of that information.

The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) was developed in the United Kingdom by Paul Ramsden. The original scales, including the overall satisfaction item, were:

- Good Teaching Scale (GTS)
- Appropriate Assessment Scale (AAS)
- Appropriate Workload Scale (AWS)
- Clear Goals Scale (CGS)
- Overall Satisfaction Item (OSI)

An additional scale, the Generic Skills Scale (GSS), was added for the purposes of the Australian national survey. The Generic Skills Scale is conceptually different from the other scales insofar as it seeks student self-reports of their skill development. Otherwise, the CEQ is based on the assumption that the student experience of certain aspects of teaching and the educational environment are associated with effective learning. High ratings on CEQ scales are argued to be associated with effective learning.

Most attention in Australia has focused on the GTS, GSS and OSI. In 2002, the number of scales was expanded in response to concern about the coverage of the instrument to include:

- Student Support scale,
- Learning Resources scale,
- Learning Community scale,
- Graduate Qualities scale,
- Intellectual Motivation scale .

Universities are now able to customize the CEQ (to a degree) by incorporating these optional scales. The GTS, GSS and OSI remain a core requirement.

As students' perceptions of teaching are influenced by their fields of study, Paul Ramsden has argued that it is appropriate only to compare like courses or fields of study and that comparisons of institutional aggregates should be avoided. Accordingly, the reporting of CEQ data has focused on course/field of

study. Typically, the differences between comparable courses across institutions are small on most of the CEQ scales. The annual CEQ report prepared by Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) avoids overt rankings, but such comparisons can be made by third parties – the *Good universities guide*,[3] for example, has converted CEQ data into five-star ratings of the quality of teaching at institutional level. There is little evidence that these ratings have significantly influenced the prospective student market.

The CEQ is believed to be a valid, reliable and stable instrument. Studies using Rasch modelling have suggested that it measures a single dimension; however the original scales have face-validity and satisfactory construct-validity according to factor analysis. The field of study is the single greatest influence on CEQ scores. Age is also an influence, with older graduates rating their courses more highly than younger graduates.

Has the use of the CEQ data led to improvement in teaching and learning?

It is difficult to say if the CEQ data have led to improvement in teaching and learning. CEQ data have provided an external reference point against which institutions can judge their performance and many approaches to evaluation at institutional level are now based on CEQ items or scales — in this regard the conceptual influence has been significant. Nevertheless, numerous criticisms have been made about the CEQ and the national survey, including:

- the narrow conception of 'good teaching' embodied in the CEQ's items and scales,
- the expectation that students can 'average' across an entire degree course,
- the variations in survey methodologies among institutions and the variations in response rates,
- the failure to accommodate demographic differences in the student population and other contextual factors (though DEST has employed econometric measures in an effort to account for this),
- the production of institutional aggregates and other inappropriate uses of the data, including for marketing purposes.

Learning and Teaching Performance Fund

In 2005, DEST introduced an incentive fund that uses CEQ data among the performance indicators. The fund awarded $58 million in 2005, with 14 universities in two bands being allocated additional funding on a per capita basis. The government seeks with this fund to raise the status of teaching alongside research and to stimulate improvement in teaching.

The Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF) uses seven indicators:

- graduate employment rates,
- rate of progression to research higher degrees,
- student progression,
- student retention,
- CEQ Good Teaching Scale,
- CEQ Generic Skills Scale,
- CEQ Overall Satisfaction Item.

The raw indicator data are adjusted for contextual factors that may influence institutional performance.

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[3] See http://www.thegoodguides.com.au/

The LTPF has been a contentious development and many concerns have been raised by institutions. Clearly the government wishes to use incentive funding mechanisms such as this to stimulate activity. Particular concerns with the LTPF include:

- the variation between institutions in the way CEQ data are collected (though this is being attended to),

- the use of indicators that are unlikely to be closely associated with excellence in teaching – graduate employment rates, for example are subject to significant reputational effects, and, similarly, student retention is related to institutional positional status,

- the weightings attached to the indicators,

- the use of institutional aggregations rather than field of study data,

- the merit in awarding additional funding to the best performing institutions rather than those who might benefit from the resources,

- the possibility of 'perverse' effects as institutions try to maximise performance – for example, the incentive to pass more students may threaten academic standards,

- the communication to the internal and domestic student market that there are 'good' and 'bad' teaching universities.

After the first round of funding in 2005, DEST has called for submissions from institutions to assist in modifying the scheme. Possible considerations are:

- simplification of the indicator adjustment methodology to use fewer variables, thus making the data more transparent,

- the use of new indicators, such as from the First Year Experience Questionnaire or Graduate Skills Assessment,

- the allocation of some of the funds to reward improvement in performance as well as excellence, thus offering incentives to lower ranked institutions,

- the allocation of some of the funds to reward institutions for teaching and learning improvement plans.

References

Ramsden, P. (1991). A performance indicator of teaching quality in higher education: The Course Experience Questionnaire . *Studies in Higher Education* v.16, n.2, p.129-150.
Wilson, K., Lizzio, A. and Ramsden, P. (1997). The development, validation and application of the Course Experience Questionnaire. *Studies in Higher Education* v.22, n1, p.33-53.

Information on the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund can be found at:
http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/learning_teaching/ltpf/

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This session is about the big picture of performance indicators in higher education and about which instruments are being used and where. It also covers the Australian experience in more detail, which is interesting and highly relevant to the Symposium.

What are the measurements being used for?

In the past fifteen years quality assurance has become part of the fabric of higher education, and it is here to stay. In general, governments want more data on which to base an understanding of the performance of tertiary education systems and to drive system improvement. Equally, increasingly institutions want data,

whether it be to enable continuous improvement or for marketing purposes. Also, in a more client/consumer context, students and prospective employers also want data and 'consumer' information on what institutions offer.

Within this context, institutional rankings, especially international rankings, are unlikely to go away; they are increasingly a part of tertiary education and will probably increasingly influence domestic and international student choice. Over the past fifteen years, a good deal of work has gone into developing performance indicators for the whole range of student activities, and considerable experience has been gained with performance indicators and the measurement of university activities. Most performance indicator frameworks are now modeled around the measurement of *inputs*, *processes* and/or *outputs.*

Measuring the quality of teaching and learning

With regard to outputs, not all that is valued in higher education is easily measured, especially the 'higher order' objectives. Measures of the quality of teaching, learning and the 'value-added' effects of higher education are particularly elusive and subject to the effects of reputation. Present performance indicators for teaching/learning quality have alternative conceptual bases and most have a highly subjective element to them.

There is a substantial international literature on what make good measurement of higher education indicators. The qualities of good performance indicators in higher education are:

- precise definition, good psychometric properties (such as good validity and reliability),
- few in number, simple, transparent and with good face-validity,
- clear links to goals and objectives,
- capable of detecting changes over time,
- not excessively lagged,
- 'raw' scores adjusted for contextual factors (if possible),
- not easily manipulated if they are used for comparison.

Indicators should be used within a well-prescribed framework for data collection and reporting.

Approaches to data collection

Multiple purposes need to be considered because these influence the questions asked and the patterns of reporting. Purposes can include:

- quality assurance and accountability, including perhaps resource allocation,
- continuous improvement, benchmarking,
- information needs of prospective students,
- information needs of prospective employers.

Whether the purposes are 'summative' or 'diagnostic' affects the approaches to data collection and reporting.

If one is talking about measurement and performance indicators then one is looking for norm referencing or criterion referencing. For teaching and learning, criterion referencing is hard to define. Therefore one ends up with norm referencing, which means by comparison against like programmes or like institutions. There are significant issues for discussion about whatever measurement is selected and the suitable reference points.

- Are they against self or against other institutions and/or over time?

- Where does the fields of study or the programme variations come into all of this?

- Eventually, what can be done across national borders, if anything, given diversity of context?

Obviously, measurement is not neutral. What one measures influences practice – directly and indirectly. In some ways that is a good thing, because if the measurement is robust, the right things are being measured in the right way and hopefully practice is also being driven in certain ways. A simple example is that if you start evaluating the quality of on-line delivery, that becomes an obvious incentive for teaching staff to do more in that area. In other words, you can drive performance through what you measure; a focus on quantitative measures attaches privileges to certain goals and activities, and thus measurement steers efforts in certain directions.

But indicators can have a normative effect that can act against diversity, with the risk of system 'homogenisation', and special institutional/programme characteristics (such as flexible delivery, equity group initiatives) are not being measured.

New Zealand appears to be one year behind Australia in terms of setting up the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence (NCTTE). Bodies such as these – such as the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in Australia, the Higher Education Academy in the United Kingdom - are often separated from the measurement side of things and, by and large, they keep out of the messy business of evaluation.

Measurement instruments

NSS (United Kingdom)

A recent development in the United Kingdom is the *National Student Survey* (NSS), with all universities participating in it by surveying students near the end of their study. Initiated by the Higher Education Funding Council of England within the English quality assurance framework, it is a recent development with data from one survey only available to date. All institutions participated, and students were surveyed near the end of study. The survey instrument uses CEQ-like scales, including an overall satisfaction item. A website (Teaching Quality Information: www.tqi.ac.uk) published the findings by institution and subject. It was possible to do head-to-head comparisons of institutions on the website, and the emphasis appears to be on information for prospective students. However, there is no evidence on the website as to how institutions might be using the data. The site seems to be more a device for prospective students to use.

A comment from a participant noted that there is not much in the way of contextualisation when data is presented in this way. In response, the example used unadjusted scores; these do not take account of context. It is important to stress that to have good performance indicators and to make comparisons real, raw scores have to be adjusted to take account of differences. It is difficult to imagine how students, or prospective students and their families, might make any use of the raw data, except at the tail ends of the distribution. It has not been until recently in Australia that the CEQ data has shown up as prominent in student decision-making.

NSSE (United States of America)

In the United States, a large number of colleges and universities had participated in the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE) since it had first become available. NSSE was conceived in 1998, and piloted in 1999; in 2005, over 500 colleges and universities participated. NSSE is administered by Indiana University for a not-for-profit organisation supported by a trust and institutional participation fees. The website was: http://nsse.iub.edu/index.cfm. The instrument measures five areas of performance. Individual institutional data is not published, and the data is used for institutional planning and for stakeholder information. Canada administers its own version of NSSE; thirty-one universities participated in 2005.

CEQ (Australia)

In the late 1980s the Australian Government set about developing a set of performance indicators for Australian Higher Education, hence the **Course Experience Questionnaire** (CEQ). The groundbreaking work had been done by the late Professor Russell Linke. There have been over ten years' experience with CEQ as part of a graduate survey agreed to by the Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee. It is not a Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) imposition on universities, but something the universities have chosen to do themselves. Institutions administer the surveys and use various forms of data collection, and the reporting is centralised. The results are published for all institutions by field of study.

Each year the CEQ findings are made public. In particular the annual publication *Good universities guide* has been very keen to publish the data. However, it gives its own spin on the data, which may be unhelpful. Research into the use of the annual *Good universities guide* suggests that careers and course advisers take it seriously, which can affect student decision-making. Institutions are taking the data from the CEQ seriously because there are issues of money and status that have become attached to this. The CEQ has, sadly, acted against the interests of diversity and has led to a narrowing of the agenda – much to the complaint of the flexible delivery providers, and the concerns of some equity groups.

A question from a participant asked whether the university sector in Australia is similar to that in the United Kingdom and New Zealand where providers from other sectors have sought to become universities, thereby degrading capability or quality. In response, it is noted that most Australian universities are large, comprehensive, multi-campus institutions, although the Federal Government has been keen to open up to diversity.

FYEO (Australia)

In Australia, the **First Year Experience Questionnaire** (FYEQ) – a study to monitor the experiences of first-year students – was developed by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne. The FYEQ is used every five years in a national study, administered in a sample of Australian universities and funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). The FYEQ is also used by a number of individual institutions each year. The data that results is reported individually to institutions, and data from other institutions is available but without names. It incorporates CEQ items plus some other scales such as academic application and academic orientation.

PREQ (Australia)

Australia also has a **Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire** (PREQ) which focuses on research higher degrees. As one would expect, it has an emphasis on supervision, resources and support.

The Course Experience Questionnaire scales

The CEQ scales are as follows.

Three core scales

- Good Teaching Scale   (GTS)
- Generic Skills Scale   (GSS)
- Overall Satisfaction Item   (OSI)

Other scales

- Appropriate Assessment Scale   (AAS)
- Appropriate Workload Scale   (AWS)
- Clear Goals Scale   (CGS)

- Student Support Scale   (SSS)
- Learning Resources Scale   (LRS)
- Learning Community Scale   (LCS)
- Graduate Qualities Scale   (GQS)
- Intellectual Motivation Scale   (IMS)

There are benefits from having the national CEQ survey. They include:

- focusing attention on teaching and learning,
- showing evidence of gradual improvement over time in the CEQ scores,
- being effective in identifying courses at the ends of the distribution,
- aligning internal evaluation with CEQ conceptual framework/scales/items.

However, there are some concerns with the CEQ.

- Because institutions align their own internal evaluations with the CEQ structure there is less lag time than with the CEQ, and where there have been low levels of student satisfaction, institutions have been quicker to fix subjects and papers/courses by a range of things including staff deployment or changing curricula. There is too much lag time with the CEQ.
- The CEQ is a fairly mediocre instrument. There is a narrow conception of good teaching, a claimed failure to accommodate diversity (for example, flexible delivery), and it measures good but not superlative teaching.
- It measures only the classroom experience and not the broader 'total' student experience.
- Most significantly, it is asking students to average over a whole programme of study, yet very little is known about how students make such a global assessment.
- Inappropriate comparisons are often being made – you can properly compare only within a field of study.
- Whilst the aligning of internal evaluation programmes with the CEQ conceptual framework/scales/items is a good thing, it is also a bad thing because of the potential narrowing effect going on.

In the main part of the questionnaire, the CEQ measures one dimension:

- high correlations between some scales – such as Generic Skills Scale (GSS) and Graduate Qualities Scale (GQS),
- Good Teaching Scale (GTS) and Graduate Qualities Scale (GQS) separate,
- Learning Community Scale (LCS) overlaps with Good Teaching Scale (GTS) and Generic Skills Scale (GSS).

National Learning and Teaching Performance Fund

Australia now has the National Learning and Teaching Performance Fund (LTPF). In 2006, $54 million has been allocated on the basis of seven performance indicators, and the funding will increase year by year. To qualify for the money, institutions have to submit quality assurance plans and certain data with regard to professional development activity, after which funds are allocated by an expert committee using seven indicators. Of the 38 institutions that applied, 14 received funding. Because funding was on a per capital basis not just on how universities scored, politics is playing an important part.

A participant commented that New Zealand should not go down this track; in response, there is no suggestion that it should.

A participant commented on how such a system rewarded the institutions that are already doing well, yet the ones that could do with help to improve are not getting any financial assistance. In response, it was noted that the Department for Education, Science and Training is engaging in a process of consultation with universities to talk about what adjustments might be made to the model. One suggestion was to reward improvement; yet, equally, a band of institutions did not like that idea.

The seven performance indicators for the LTPF, and the weightings given to them, are:

Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)

Graduates in full-time employment	11.48%
Graduates in full-time study	10.29%

Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)

Generic Skills Scale	17.91%
Good Teaching Scale	18.52%
Overall Satisfaction item	18.90%

Retention	10.65%
Student Progression (SPU)	12.26%

Most of these are poor proxies for quality of teaching and learning. 'Graduates in full-time employment' said as much about educational context and the status of the institution as it did about quality of teaching and learning. Retention is due partly to positional status of the institution and the course. These rankings have caused much strategic analysis to be undertaken, and institutions are looking at where they ranked and at where there was room to remove any volatility.

A participant commented that the discussion in New Zealand, both from the perspectives of the Tertiary Education Commission and the Minister of Tertiary Education, has been not about ranking just universities and polytechnics but about ranking every tertiary institution on the same scale. In response, it was noted that that is a unique initiative which will be accompanied by a lot of complications. In Australia, the universities and the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector are politically very separate. In New Zealand, points of comparison will be needed, and the ridiculous and simplistic extremes of rankings and league ladders should be avoided.

Desirable features for measurement instruments

A wish-list for the development and implementation of measurement instruments is as follows.

- Use scales and items with good statistical pedigree and good face-validity.
- Design instruments to accommodate diversity.
- Limit the lag-time between the survey and the publication of data.
- Emphasise the diagnostic purposes of the instrument.
- Put in place protocols for publishing data.
- Try to minimize the risk of survey fatigue.

New Zealand initiatives – 1

Improving tertiary student outcomes in their first year of study

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Linda Leach and Nick Zepke, *Massey University*

What, specifically, has your institution/organisation done to measure and enhance student engagement with learning?

The projects we have been engaged in over the last four years have focused on tertiary student outcomes including retention, progression and completion. We lead a two year project, funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) under the umbrella of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, which involved seven tertiary institutions – four polytechnics, two universities and one college of education. We investigated students', teachers' and administrators' views about factors which trigger early withdrawal or enhance retention and therefore engagement with their studies.

What motivated this activity/project?

Our interest was sparked when we were involved in a contract with the Ministry of Education, conducting a research synthesis on learning environment effects on tertiary student outcomes. (See resource 3 below). The TLRI project grew directly from the research synthesis on student support and how it impacted on student outcomes. It gave us the opportunity to research retention and engagement issues in New Zealand as we had found little local, published research in our literature search.

What theoretical and research base underpins it?

There is a strong international research base on retention issues. Large syntheses of research and many research projects, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, have been published over three decades. The dominant theoretical base is Vincent Tinto's longitudinal model of institutional departure. Central to Tinto's model is the idea of *integration* – students are more likely to be retained and complete their studies (engage with learning) when they are integrated, academically and socially, into their institutions. In our work we have added another dimension to the theory, identifying an *adaptation* approach in some of the most recent studies. Institutions using an adaptation approach adapt their culture, processes and practices to accept, value and respect the diverse backgrounds, needs and cultural capital that students bring, thereby enhancing their engagement with learning and chances of success.

How deep and wide is the support and participation in these efforts?

Internationally there is a great deal of interest in retention issues, resulting in single and multi-institutional studies over some three decades. In New Zealand interest is mounting in light of government-driven sanctions, from 2006, for institutions which do not successfully retain students to completion. While it seems that many institutions may be acting to improve retention, studies have only recently begun to be published. The commitment to our TLRI project was very pleasing. Seven institutions agreed to participate for the two years and provided very useful and varied data.

What are the three-to-four most important findings to date?

- Retention is an issue in New Zealand, mirroring that in other countries such as United States, United Kingdom, Australia. Data shows high levels of 'wastage' of government funding, with students not completing courses/qualifications. As much as one third of funding in New Zealand is 'wasted' on people who do not complete their qualification (Scott, 2005); 100 million pounds per year is 'wasted' in the United Kingdom (Yorke, 1999).

- Institutional cultures which are learner-centred promote more student engagement and achieve better retention.

- Teachers can make a difference. In particular, positive relationships with teachers, support staff and other students are important in student engagement, learning and retention.

- Individual institutions need to research their own retention issues. While some retention issues are shared, some are unique to individual institutional contexts.

What are the next three-to-four most valuable enhancements those findings have prompted?

From our TLRI data we synthesised nine guidelines for institutional practice. These include:

- Create an institutional culture that is learner-centred. It welcomes students, respects and adapts to their diverse values, attributes and knowledge.

- Foster positive relationships between students and staff. When relationships are strong students are more likely to discuss issues, helping to prevent early withdrawal.

- Organise class/tutorial sizes so teachers/tutors can establish rapport with each student. Class size affects students' willingness to engage in class. Every student should have the opportunity to establish good rapport with at least one teacher/tutor.

- Monitor student performance as an early warning system. While some factors which lead to withdrawal are non-institutional, through good pastoral care institutions can minimise actual departure.

What's next?

We encourage all institutions to research their unique retention and student engagement issues. Only by identifying those factors which are most important in our own contexts can we hope to address the issues which are most affecting student engagement and retention in our own locations.

We plan to continue research into retention and engagement issues in New Zealand, our institution and our programmes.

What advice do you have for others interested in doing something similar?

Get started now! Retention is so important to our personal, individual and national wellbeing. We need people who can continue learning throughout their lives, who can adapt to change and contribute to society. Success in education is one way of achieving this. Conduct research into your programmes and institutions to identify the specific issues affecting retention, engagement and success. Start small if necessary. Apply for funding from your institution and external sources. Draw on the large amount of literature on retention to identify research questions and designs for your projects. Talk to us; we are happy to help.

Reports

The reports on the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative project can be accessed at:

1   Full report
Zepke, N., Leach, L., Prebble, T., Campbell, A., Coltman, D., Dewart, B., Gibson, M., Hendersobn,J., Leadbeater, J., Purnell, S., Rowan, L., Solomon, N., Wilson, S. (2005)
Improving tertiary student outcomes in the first year of study. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
    http://www.tlri.org.nz/pdfs/NickZepkefullreport.pdf

2   Summary report
Improving tertiary student outcomes in their first year of study
    http://www.tlri.org.nz/pdfs/NickZepkesummaryreport.pdf

The synthesis of literature completed for the Ministry of Education can be accessed at:

3   Full report
Prebble, T., Hargraves, H., Leach, L., Naidoo, K., Suddaby, G., Zepke, N. (2004)
***Impact of student support services and academic development programmes on student outcomes in undergraduate tertiary study: a synthesis of the research**. Report to the Ministry of Education* Wellington: Ministry of Education.
    http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10247&data=l

4   Summary report on student support services
Supporting students in tertiary study
    http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10245&data=l

5   Summary report on academic staff development
Academic staff development
    http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=10246&data=l

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Scott, D. (2005). Retention, completion and progression in tertiary education in New Zealand. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, v.27, n.1, 3-17.
Yorke, M. (1999). *Leaving early: undergraduate non-completion in higher education*. London: Falmer Press.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DISCUSSION

- The non-institutional factors impacting on student engagement can be influenced by institutions, although there are times when issues are beyond institutional control.

- Where students feel they are 'fish in water' within an institution, engagement is more likely. Institutional adaptation is as important to learner engagement as integration.

- Do not homogenise the sector. Each institution needs to research and address its specific engagement and retention issues. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work.

New Zealand initiatives - 2

National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Kirsty Wallace, *Tertiary Education Commission and* **Colleen Slagter**, *Ministry of Education*

What motivated this activity/project?

In late 2004, the Government announced its intention to accelerate the culture shift towards more effective teaching and learning in tertiary education by bringing together key tertiary sector leaders in a Teaching Matters Forum, a sector working group, to provide advice on the terms of reference for a National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. The Forum's advice was informed by meetings of Forum members and a consultation exercise that involved over 600 people at eight regional meetings and focus group discussions. That advice has been received by the Government, and the government agreed to the establishment of the National Centre, and will provide funding of approximately $4 million per annum to support the Centre. The Centre is being established to assist tertiary education organisations and educators to achieve the best possible educational outcomes for learners.

What will be the Centre 'look' like?

The Centre will be established as an organisation with a distinct identity and will be hosted by a tertiary education organisation or a group of tertiary education organisations. As agreed by the Minister, the values and principles that should be reflected in the Centre's activities include:

- focus on the impact on learner outcomes,
- being evidence-based,
- being excellent,
- being collaborative,
- being responsive to the diversity of teaching and learning contexts,
- being accessible to all interests and perspectives.

Using a network-oriented approach, the Centre will have the following functions:

- building the teaching capability of tertiary education organisations and educators,
- providing associated advice to the tertiary education sector and government agencies,
- commissioning and, where appropriate, conducting research, monitoring, and evaluation about effective teaching and learning in tertiary education.

The Centre will support all tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and groups who work with teachers and learners, including existing networks and professional bodies, while remaining relevant and accessible to individual teachers. It will also create incentives for quality, such as running and further improving the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards from 2007. Further information about the Centre is available at: http://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/teaching2/ncftte/about.htm

Related research

The work on the National Centre has been and will continue to be guided by a range of research. The presentation will include reference to the literature review by Prebble et al (2004), that outlines the impact of academic development on student outcomes. Other relevant publications will also be signalled.

What's next?

The Tertiary Education Commission is currently undertaking work to establish the Centre. A request for proposal has been released, with applications to host the Centre due on 21 April with the Commission.

References

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ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DISCUSSION

- Is there a critical mass of support within the sector to engage with the Centre to ensure its success?

- Limited resources will challenge the Centre to prioritise and focus its work.

- Diversity of experience and indigenous factors need to be considered in relation to the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards.

New Zealand initiatives - 3

Engagement as a more helpful measure of student learning

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Russell Butson, **Sarah Carr** and **Gina Bosselman**, *University of Otago*

What, specifically, has your institution/organisation done to measure and enhance student engagement with learning?

The Quality Advancement Unit at the University of Otago manages:

- the Course Experience Questionnaire which gives an idea of the quality of student learning, including the quality of the learning community for students, intellectual motivation for graduates and generic skills development for both,

- the Course Outcomes Instrument which looks at generic skills development and application for graduates,

- a Quality Forum for the sharing of best practice in the University's core activities,

- resources for staff looking to undertake improvement initiatives in the University environment.

Traditionally, the University of Otago has used the student and graduate opinion surveys as an estimate of student satisfaction, as well as retention, completion and pass rates as a method of accessing student achievement. However, there has been a growing interest to investigate other data sourcing methods resulting in a number of key people at the University undertaking a feasibility study of engagement as a more helpful measure of student learning.

What motivated this activity/project?

The University of Otago has a ten-year history of using the Course Experience Questionnaire based Student Opinion Surveys and Graduate Opinion Surveys to determine student perceptions mentioned earlier. There is widespread acknowledgement that a number of the key performance indicators we are currently using may not provide us with information to enable targeted change. Research from other institutions using student engagement-based surveys suggest that instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as used in North America may allow us to more accurately identify areas that require strengthening.

The present feasibility project has been motivated by a desire to find more effective means to measure the key objectives of the University's new strategic plan.

What theoretical and research base underpins it?

Primarily we have considered the research that has come out of NSSE, in particular the research work of George Kuh and colleagues. We have also drawn heavily on the pioneering work of Alexander W. Astin (1985a, 1985b). A deeper conception of student engagement has been developed around the liberal, conservative and critical democratic conceptions put forward by Brenda McMahon and John P. Portelli (2004). We aim to compare our findings on student engagement with the more established literature that has been developed around measures of student opinion/satisfaction.

How deep and wide is the support and participation in these efforts?

It was important that the expertise required for the initial study would come from collaboration between Quality Advancement Unit, Planning, Funding Support Office and the Higher Education Development Centre. The project is supported by the heads of each of these units as well as support from the Deputy

Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International). The project has received monetary support through a University-based Quality Initiative Fund.

What are the three-to-four most important findings to date?

- That student engagement does have the potential to enhance the educational experience of students resulting in better-quality outcomes.

- That involvement/engagement must be considered within a theoretical and philosophical framework.

- That we need to establish, understand and structure the factors (engagement indicators) that contribute significantly to a quality educational experience.

- That it is more expedient to implement engagement measures in an aim to prompt the use of engagement as a method with teaching and learning than the reverse.

- The need to focus on dispositions, values, and aims associated with student engagement and not just the procedures and skills.

- The importance of using gathered data to inform students of their learning.

What are the three-to-four most valuable enhancements those findings have prompted?

We are still in the preliminary stages of our initial investigation. If our study does find merit in the use of engagement measure and if the University of Otago adopts a student engagement survey then future enhancements are most likely to come from teaching approaches/methods within faculty.

- As an agent of change: The power of involvement/engagement indicators to highlight disparities between present teaching-learning practices and contemporary HE conceptions of learning.

- Strategic value: A source of evidence-based data that is more in line with contemporary institutional policy and direction.

What's next?

The feasibility study would then go out to a variety of sectors for consultation. A pilot survey would be offered in 2007. Results of this survey would be evaluated and information fed back to the sector for consideration. If results are as positive as expected a proposal would be produced outlining the procedure and resourcing for implementation in 2008.

What advice do you have for others interested in doing something similar?

Be very clear of the nature and purpose of the information the institution requires. Assess the relevance of the competing survey instruments to produce these requirements. Finally align the selected indicators with established education theory. It is important to identify and manage the degree of disparity between the selected indicators and the prevailing education practice within the institution.

References

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    http://www.housing.sc.edu/resed/pdf/AstinInvolvement.pdf
McMahon, B., and Portelli, J. (2004) Engagement for what? Beyond popular discourses of student engagement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools,* v.3, n.1, p.59-77.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DISCUSSION

- Should we include a measure of engagement to reflect a wider definition of quality teaching and learning?

- The concept of engagement can interact with multiple theories, such as curriculum, teaching, student, environment, critical democratic/critical thinking.

- Engagement might not always be liberating, particularly when learning is constrained by curriculum.

New Zealand initiatives - 4

The integration of learning and study skills into the curriculum

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Jerry Hoffman, *Southern Institute of Technology*

What, specifically, has your institution/organisation done to measure and enhance student engagement with learning?

As part of the continuing focus on enhancing student learning, initiatives have been put in place to integrate the teaching of learning and study skills into the classroom environment. This has been a multifaceted approach involving hands on teaching, programme development and staff training. This approach centres on methods whereby tutors and lecturers can incorporate the teaching of study and learning strategies and techniques into their own course curriculum. A learning support practitioner introduces tutors and lecturers to a variety of learning and study techniques. Through group discussions, assignments and presentations, tutors and lecturers focus on how they can begin to incorporate these skills within their individual programmes.

What motivated this activity/project?

This project was motivated by both my own 15 years experience as a Learning Support Lecturer and research undertaken for my doctoral thesis. It became evident that the teaching of learning and study skills could be more effective if taught within the context of what students were learning in the classroom, rather than in the more traditional form of generic workshops.

How deep and wide is the support and participation in these efforts?

Support for this initiative within the institution has varied widely. Some teaching staff do not see the teaching of these skills as part of their role while others do not acknowledge the importance of these skills. However, several teaching staff who have embraced this initiative have remarked on the perceived benefits of incorporating these skills into their curriculum. Staff have also remarked that student course evaluations were favourable with regards to the teaching of these skills as part of the programme. Interviews with students who have attended both generic workshops and a more integrated approach within the classroom have also revealed a more positive response to the integrated initiative.

What theoretical and research base underpins it?

Research that underpins this initiative stems from the literature which discusses that the skills needed to be a more effective learner would to better off acquired in the context of everyday academics activities. Research suggests that the best outcomes are achieved when content and approach are closely linked to the actual problems students are encountering in the classroom. The literature also discusses how students who are cognisant of the learning and study skills they use, and understand how to match these strategies to the learning context, will be in a better position to transfer these skills to another context.

What are the three-to-four most important findings to date?

The most important findings to come from this initiative are:

- The benefits for students to transfer these learning and study skills to a variety of situations both academically and vocationally

- That students see the connection between these learning and study skills and 'real life' situations. This can be supplemented by authentic examples given by the teaching staff

- The need to 'convince' teaching staff about the benefits of such an initiative

- The need for staff developers, teaching staff and learning support practitioners to work towards developing a comprehensive plan to develop this initiative that is supported by management

What are the next three-to-four most valuable enhancements those findings have prompted?

Most valuable enhancements from the findings:

- From the student perspective – an increased understanding and acceptance of the importance of learning and study skills

- From a teaching staff perspective – both an increased understanding and acceptance of the importance of learning and study skills and thinking about how these may best be applied to their own teaching situation

- From an organisation perspective – a starting point from which to begin to recognise the importance of this initiative with regard to students' learning

What's next?

The next step in this initiative involves more expanded primary research on the benefits to integrated programmes within different faculties and courses. As there are a number of different teaching methods being employed within the institution (from more theory based to more practically oriented courses) it would be helpful to identify how best to integrate the learning and study skills that best suits a certain curriculum.

What advice do you have for others interested in doing something similar?

The recommendations for other institutions to carry out such an initiatives would be:

- From very early-on in the developmental stages of this initiative involve the teaching staff, staff developers and curriculum designers (if appropriate). A team approach will be most effective for implementation for this integrated approach

- Once some facet of the initiative has commenced involve the students in evaluating what is working within the programme and what could be improved

- Perhaps start the initiative in one department or faculty. This can then be used as an example of good practice for other areas

References

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Maxwell, M (1997). *Improving student learning skills: a new edition.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

ISSUES ARISING FROM DISCUSSION

- This work relates (typically) to mathematics skills, academic writing, and academic enquiry modes.

- The process is one of integration not substitution (i.e., not at the expense of other curriculum components).

- The work allows a greater contextualization of learning and study skills.

- Buy-in from academic staff is extremely variable; the incentive is that the assessments submitted for marking by academic staff may be of higher quality.

- Usually the work requires close co-operation between learning support staff and academic staff based in Schools/Departments/Faculties.

New Zealand initiatives – 5

Engagement: a shared responsibility

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Helen Anderson, *Manukau Institute of Technology*

This paper is adapted from: Anderson, H., Stephenson, M., Millward, P., Rio, N. (2004). Access and engagement: a New Zealand study. In I. M.Duranczyk, J.L.Higbee, D.B.Lundell (eds), *Best practices for access and retention in higher education*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota, Centre for Research on Developemental Education and Urban Literacy.
Available at: http://www.gen.umn.edu/research/crdeul/pdf/monograph/5-b.pdf

This presentation conceptualises engagement from the perspective of student experience and institutional responsibilities as evidenced in a longitudinal study of student engagement from bridging programmes to a professional degree and on to the work place.

What theoretical and research base underpins the project?

The nature of engagement

Vincent Tinto's early work identified academic and social engagement as the critical factors in attrition. He conceptualised engagement along the same lines as Durkheim's view of suicide as resulting from inadequate integration into the social fabric. Tinto (1975) suggests that dropout can be similarly modelled as lack of connection with the academic and social system of the tertiary institution. While 'dropout' and retention are not a matched pair, the concept of engagement (or connection) permeates both discussions. Gee (1998) suggests that lack of connection would have its origins in the attempts of institutions to maintain an exclusivity which would not provide an 'engaging' environment for groups especially where these are minorities within the wider society.

Tinto's work has been criticised (Tierney 1999) for not considering the two way process of accommodation between institutions and minorities which may be seen as essential if tertiary study is to be accessible to traditionally under represented groups. The concept of engagement as a reciprocal activity opens the door to an interpretation wherein the activity of engagement may be seen as a mechanism not just for the student to adapt to (or integrate into) the institution but for the institution to also adapt to diverse students. Failure to 'engage' or 'integrate' may be as much a function of the individual experience as of the institutional attitude. While minorities continue to be over-represented in 'dropout' statistics, institutional adaptation remains part of institutional responsibility. (Tinto 2002)

Tinto's recent work (2002, 1997, 1993) describes and analyses 'learning communities'. He proposes that the significant elements which support effective access (enrolment, retention and success) to tertiary education are:

- academic and social support,
- academic and social integration,
- student learning.

In other words, students are engaged. For this to occur, Tinto states that the institution must be committed to student engagement and this translates into the fourth element, which is high expectations, a genuine belief across the institution in the capacity of all students to succeed.

The project

This project focussed on a Bachelor of Education (teaching) programme taught at the home campus of a major university [University of Auckland] and also at a polytechnic campus [Manukau Institute of

Technology] some 20 kilometres distant in an area which is economically disadvantaged and which is peopled with groups who are generally under represented in tertiary studies at degree level. The programme is located on the campus of a polytechnic. The programme is 'owned' by the University and the Polytechnic provides the space and student services.

The challenge for this degree programme is to provide a learning environment which makes it possible for its students to succeed. The students on this programme are culturally diverse, and primarily mature students who have frequently gained entry to the university through its provisions for special admission. These provisions recognise life and work experience and academic potential where traditional academic qualifications have not been attained by applicants over the age of twenty.

The project method was to interview students from each of the year cohorts and then to re-interview these students each subsequent year of study and including their first year as teachers. The interview schedule has been designed in collaboration with the students and the interviews are conducted with a view to recording the student's experiences and their interpretations.

The elements of engagement identified in an analysis of the interview transcripts are listed below.

- *Engagement with lecturers.*
  This element is expressed in the data across three strands: asking questions, lecturer accessibility and feedback.

- *Engagement with peers.*
  Engagement with peers brings together 'study groups' and 'social engagement'.

- *Engagement with the institution.*
  Several themes interact around this aspect of engagement. 'Support Services', 'Administration (enrolment, loans, allowances, course changes)', and 'Value of the institute brand' emerged.

External influences on the quality of engagement

In this study, 'external factors' – that is, those not under the direct influence of the institution - were identified as impacting on the quality of the student's engagement with learning. The strength of family support and expectations, the 'rightness' of the choice of the subject and the impact of differences between home language and the language of study were noted as well as the need to take paid work.

It reflects considerable progress to shift thinking from assuming external factors are the primary cause of attrition (and that institutions need only maintain their academic character) to seeing institutional responsibility as a large element in attrition. However, it would, be unfortunate to ignore external factors which may impinge on the capacity of the student to engage in learning. It may be argued that the balance of priorities for students (learning versus external pressures) is influenced by the quality of the learning environment but the current models offer no specific analysis of where the direct effects are. It may be that where the quality of engagement for students reaches a significant level, structural and personal factors identified as 'external' may have a reducing impact on the students prioritisation of learning over external factors. Further, the quality of engagement in terms of creating a set of shared understandings between student and institution may be critical.

The measurement of engagement is thus not separate from institutional data identifying completion. However, use of that data to identify where engagement is poor and to act to address it in terms of strengthening the elements of engagement which can be influenced by the institution and identified in this study may be a greater issue.

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ISSUES ARISING FROM DISCUSSION

- The value of graduate surveys (three-to-five years after graduation) is the information gained about what learning activities students had engaged with.

- The use of retention as a valid indicator, while recognising that retention is influenced by a wide range of factors, some within the institution's control, some not.

- Comparisons between raw retention rates may often be invalid; we need to compare like with like.

- Engagement may not always lead to gaining a qualification; some students leave education early to enter the workforce.

New Zealand initiatives - 6

Engaging international students

What do students want? What do teachers need?

Parallel paper: short presentation and discussion

Colleen Ward, *Victoria University of Wellington*

What motivated this project?

The presentation arises from research conducted by the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research at Victoria University of Wellington. The Centre specialises in issues relating to culture and cultural diversity with a long-term aim of enhancing intercultural relations in New Zealand.

What theoretical and research base underpins it?

The issues discussed today are based primarily on three reference sources:

- • a Ministry of Education literature review of the impacts of international students on domestic students and host institutions (Ward, 2001, 2006),

- • a Ministry of Education report on the findings of a national survey of over 2700 international students in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004),

- • a series of five studies, commissioned by Education New Zealand and conducted by Ward, Masgoret, Ho, Holmes, Newton, Crabbe and Cooper, on perceptions of and interactions with international students, including surveys of 543 domestic students and 223 teachers and focus group discussions with secondary, tertiary and private language school instructors (Ward, 2005).

All of these reports can be downloaded from the web-site of the Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research at: www.vuw.ac.nz/cacr.

The international classroom

Classrooms are a microcosm of wider societies, and cultural values and assumptions implicitly underpin educational activities. There is a rich literature in cross-cultural psychology and multicultural education that documents cross-cultural differences in teaching and learning styles, including:

- • preferences for cooperative versus competitive learning,

- • intrinsic and extrinsic motivation,

- • basic approaches to study and memorization,

- • differences in the definition and implications of plagiarism,

- • communication styles in the classroom,

- • dialectic and dialogic educational approaches; and even fundamental conceptions of intelligence (Ward, 2001, 2006).

These differences raise issues for teachers in international classrooms. On one hand, the presence of international students is assumed to bring a broader cultural perspective to educational processes and the content areas of study. On the other hand, teachers often struggle to find a balance between familiar and novel educational approaches. As expressed by a teacher in the focus group study by Prue Holmes (2005, p.96):

Suddenly you have large classes, large proportions of international students, and I'm no longer sure whether or not I'm meant to be giving a pure Western education…the difficulty of working with so many large numbers and to convert them to, what am I meant to convert them? I'm no longer sure I'm meant to be doing that…

Question: Is our education objective to assimilate international students into the New Zealand status quo or do we replace this with a multicultural classroom?

Cultural Inclusiveness in the Classroom

Almost all things we were taught about and those we discuss are British. Some are not even relevant to my country nor are they relevant to my work at home. But what frustrates me more is that sometimes when I try to share with the class my experiences, the lecturer does not show interest. (Maundeni, 2001, p. 270).

Cultural inclusiveness in the classroom refers to an acknowledgement of cultural diversity, a validation of cultural differences, an acceptance of a multiplicity of processes and content in the educational environment and a broadly inclusive approach to education. How do New Zealand classrooms fare in terms of cultural inclusiveness? The national survey of over 2700 international students from secondary, tertiary and private language schools found that half of the students agreed that classmates are accepting of cultural differences; 59% agreed that they feel included in their classes. Less than half (47%) believed that teachers understand cultural differences in learning styles, and 42% agreed that there are chances for others to learn about their culture. These findings point to a moderate amount of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom, but also room for improvement.

A sense of cultural inclusiveness is important to international students. It is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including more sources of social support, beliefs New Zealanders have positive attitudes toward international students, less perceived discrimination and greater life satisfaction in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Culturally inclusive practices in the classroom also benefit domestic students. Those who report greater inclusiveness in their classes have more international friends, more frequent interaction with international students, fewer perceived barriers to intercultural interaction, lowered sense of threat and competition from international students and more positive attitudes toward international students.

Teachers report a range of classroom activities that reflect a culturally inclusive approach. Most teachers (78%) maintain that they encourage students to be accepting of cultural differences and that students from different cultures work well together (61%). But there is a large gap between teacher and student perceptions. While 84% of secondary teachers and 73% of tertiary instructors say that they encourage intercultural contact, only 47% of international students and 35% of domestic students agree that this is the case.

Question: What can be done to promote cultural inclusiveness in the classroom?

Teacher attitudes and skills

Most teachers have at least moderately positive attitudes toward international students and moderately strong motivation to work with them. For example, 70% of tertiary instructors agree that international students have qualities that they admire; 73% say that they enjoy teaching international students; and 68% regard this as a positive challenge. On the other hand, less than half of tertiary instructors (49%) believe that they can relate classroom content to international experiences. Only slightly more say they can assist international students with language difficulties and determine their academic needs (55% and 62%, respectively). As stated by one teacher: 'I'm not going to pretend that I know everything.' Attitudes, motivation and confidence are all important and exert direct influence on teachers' self-rated performance.

80% of tertiary instructors agreed that teachers should be trained about cultural differences in learning styles to assist international students.

Question: What types of skills and training do instructors need to work effectively in international and multicultural classrooms?

References

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ISSUES ARISING FROM DISCUSSION

▪ International students can have high expectations that teachers have a significant role in, and an interest in, their overall welfare (that is, pastoral care); this is an expectation not shared by many teachers.

▪ The instructor's own cross-cultural experience is important.

▪ The value of diversity (international students from more than just one country in the class) must be recognised.

▪ Optimal integration is when the proportion of international students is around 10%.

▪ The common perception is one of a lack of hospitality at New Zealand institutions.

New Zealand initiatives – 7

The measurement of student engagement: evaluation indicators for student engagement in learning in schools

*Plenary presentation and discussion, led by **Syd King**, Education Review Office*

BACKGROUND PAPER

What motivated this activity/project?

The development of the evaluation indicators was motivated in part by the need to recognise evidence of all the key dimensions of learning and not just a focus on academic outcomes, important though these are.

What is the source document?

The Education Review Office's 2003 publication, *Evaluation indicators for education reviews in schools,* (Education Review Office 2003) is a resource to inform the judgements that reviewers make about different aspects of schools' performance. They are also intended to clarify for school boards of trustees the basis on which the Education Review Office (ERO) will review their performance, and to assist in school self review. Symposium participants wishing to familiarise themselves with ERO's approach to evaluation in New Zealand schools, and the particular emphasis on student engagement with learning, should refer to this document.

The evaluation indicators

The evaluation indicators focus on four key dimensions of school performance – student achievement, engagement with learning, knowledge, skills and values, and governing and managing the school. 'Student engagement with learning' comprises a set of outcome indicators as well as process indicators for each of the main factors influencing student engagement:

- quality of teaching;
- assessing and feeding back;
- nurturing student well-being;
- linking school and home.

The document sets out:

- the rationale for the indicator;
- what evidence of the presence of the indicator might look like;
- the research base that underpins it.

The document describes two types of indicators – outcome indicators, and process indicators - across the four key dimensions of school performance.

- **Indicators related to student achievement**

  These are **outcome indicators** since they are a direct measure of what schools are expected to achieve. Student achievement outcomes are the most powerful indicators of school effectiveness but should not be considered in isolation from the other outcome and process indicators described.

- **Indicators related to student engagement with learning, and to knowledge, skills and values**.

  Good performance in these domains is both desirable in itself and a prerequisite for satisfactory achievement. Thus these domains provide **outcome indicators** for the work of the school, and **process indicators** for student achievement.

- **Indicators related to managing the school**

  These indicators are all **process indicators**, since the governance and management of schools are indirect contributors to student achievement. Boards of trustees have overall responsibility for the operation of the school. However, the level and nature of boards' involvement in each domain will vary according to local circumstances, and to reflect community needs and aspirations.

Education Review Office's evaluation indicators

| Student achievement |

Student engagement With learning ⟷ Knowledge, skills and values

- Quality of teaching
- Assessing and feeding back
- Nurturing student wellbeing
- Linking school and home

Governing and managing the school

- Delivering the NZ curriculum
- Curriculum design and access

  - Professional leadership
  - Day-to-day management
  - School-wide planning
  - Review and development
  - Resource management

Outcome indicators

indicators

Process

Reference

Education Review Office (2003). *Evaluation indicators for education reviews in schools.* Wellington: Education Review Office. Available at
http://www.ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/Evaluation%20Indicators%20for%20Education%20Reviews%C2%A0in%20Schools

KEY POINTS FROM THE PRESENTATION

Although the Education Review Office (ERO) has both accountability and educational improvement functions, the primary focus of ERO is on high-quality teaching and its contribution to student achievement. To do that effectively, it is necessary to consider what is happening for students in classrooms.

'Student achievement' includes academic achievement and also achievement in the broader sense – including achievement in cultural and physical aspects. So ERO is interested in the broader outcomes of schooling that all schools want to achieve for their students, as well as the academic outcome. Part of this is the evidence of student engagement with learning, and the potential longer term benefits of engagement.

Findings and conclusions in ERO reports must be based on evidence. Reviewers gather evidence during the review process as teams seek answers to the evaluative questions that shape and guide the review – see *Framework for reviews* (Education Review Office 2002/2006). It is important to have a well-developed basis for answering the evaluative questions and that is where ERO's evaluation indicators come in. They are a tool to inform the judgements that ERO reaches about the quality of what is happening in the school, including evidence of student achievement and engagement with learning.

Quality is not just about compliance with pre-defined inputs and processes but also about how well a school improves the learning and achievement of its students – and there is more than one way for schools to do that. ERO's methodology must be able to recognise and reflect that fact. Schools are not all the same, and we should not expect them to be.

Indicators

ERO's school evaluation indicators are based on its experience over the years and also draw on the Ministry of Education *Best evidence syntheses* publications (Alton-Lee 2003, Biddulph et al 2003).

Our indicators are designed to support review officers (and schools if they want to use them) in reaching conclusions about a school's impact on achievement. They are not a checklist. Rather, they are designed as a tool to inform reviewer judgements, using the best possible evidence. What is the evidence of actual student achievement and progress in this classroom? What is the evidence of effective teaching impacting on learning? The indicators are a guide to what this evidence might look like. They are not intended to be prescriptive about 'the best way' or the 'right way' for teachers and schools to promote learning.

There are indicators for both educational outcomes and processes. ***Outcome indicators***, broadly defined, are direct measures of what is being evaluated. ***Process indicators*** are indirect measures – in our case the philosophies, policies and practices in schools that are believed to contribute to student learning. There is an emphasis on both educational achievement against curriculum standards and on students' progress – because looking at one without the other can be misleading. Both are important.

ERO is interested in the difference schools make for all students. For example, perhaps in one school the results appear good at face value, but you also have to look deeper at whether those results are the best they could be. Are all students making the progress that could be expected? Equally there can be schools that are successful in promoting student achievement/progress for many of their students even though the results overall are lower than those at another school. This could still be powerful evidence of effective teaching. So it is not as simple as just looking at standards and achievement – although these are important – but it is also a question of whether learning is maximised for all students.

ERO seeks evidence of student progress and achievement. We also ask as to how the information about learning is thought about and analysed, and how that thinking and analysis is used to improve teaching programmes (and ultimately student achievement). Most forms of analysis have a significant component of teachers simply thinking about what they know about students' learning and asking what the data

means educationally. We also ask how the thinking about, and analysis of, student achievement is used to make changes and improvements in teaching.

Another consideration is that evaluating the quality of learning and teaching in a school is not as straightforward as simply conducting observations in classrooms. There are some potentially significant traps with over-reliance on classroom observations. One is that visits tend to be for a relatively small amount of time in the life of the classroom and therefore tend to be unreliable statistically. Secondly, 'Hawthorne effect' suggests that you will not necessarily be observing typical activities and behaviour because of the potential or real impact of the observer in the room. So it is a mistake to believe that merely by observation one can identify effective teaching. You need a stronger evidential base than that – one that considers teaching practice and also considers the evidence that there are learning gains as a result. (Interestingly, the reverse may not apply. You may see unacceptable practice that needs to be dealt with, and that could be a very important reason for visiting classrooms regularly). So classroom observations are a valuable part of ERO's review process but they cannot be the only source of information we use. Talking in depth to teachers about what they know about their students' learning, and the evidence of that, is crucial to a good evaluative process.

Evaluation tools

These days there is a greater range of assessment tools that can help teachers identify reliably what students have learned. Some are specifically designed to show value-added, others can show learning gains over time even if not specifically designed as a value-added assessment tool. ERO must reach a judgement on the quality of achievement information and whether or not the school uses the information appropriately to improve teaching and learning, and for reporting and accountability purposes.

The *Evaluation indicators for education reviews* (Education Review Office 2003) – are designed as a tool for people who do practical educational evaluation. The indicators contend that the critical things influencing student achievement are:

- student engagement with learning,
- the utility of the curriculum,
- governing and managing the school.

As far as student engagement with learning is concerned, the *outcome* indicators include data on student morale, evidence of student involvement in decision making, observed student relationships and behaviour, rates of absenteeism and truancy, and rates of stand-down, suspension and exclusion. *Process* indicators for student engagement with learning include those related to the quality of teaching, assessing and feeding back, nurturing student well-being and linking school and home. The detail of what the evidence could look like for each of the indicators is spelled out in detail in the document, along with the research information that supports the indicator. The document also explains how the indicators should be used.

Unsurprisingly, the quality of teaching is likely to be related to how well students engage. Throughout the *Evaluation indicators* there is an underpinning emphasis on meta-cognition, students learning how to learn. Evidence of the engagement of families, parents, whanau, and siblings is also important in making a positive difference.

DISCUSSION OF THE INDICATORS IN
EVALUATION INDICATORS FOR EDUCATION REVIEWS

In response to a participant's suggestion that most of the indicators will translate very well into tertiary *education* in terms of student engagement, the point was made that it is difficult to adapt other people's systems, but lessons can be taken to stimulate thinking about how to do it.

In response to a participant's suggestion that expectations were different in the compulsory sector and the tertiary sector, the point was made that most people are engaged in some form of education in order to achieve something. The engagement notion is pivotal to that. Why people want to attend a lecture, seminar, or activity is the key issue. It did not make much difference whether a person is 51, 21, or 11 if he or she is motivated to learn.

Another consideration is that it is possible that something might not seem important at the time, but 15 years later it can somehow open a door to future learning or another opportunity. So it is important that possible pathways to future learning are not closed unnecessarily.

ERO tried to make the indicators fit with common sense. They have to be a practical tool. Schools can use the indicators as part of their self-review. ERO is trying hard to focus on actual evidence of learning as well as the process. One can usually detect a not very useful self-review system by asking 'What changed as a result?' If the answer is 'nothing' or 'not much', it is probably not a very good system.

Participants noted that in Australia, this kind of thing is done under the name of a quality audit. It is non-comparative and based largely on what institutions say to an audit group that they are setting out to do and what universities themselves wish to produce. It is about processes and about encouraging self-review. On the other hand Australia has studies that are quantitative and deliberately comparative in purpose.

In discussion about comparing institutions' performance, one with another, the point was made that comparison is a legitimate use of information. People do it all the time. However, league tables typically rank schools according to results without considering value-added, which is a serious weakness.

In discussion regarding audit vis-à-vis evaluation, the point was made that they are related activities. However, audits tend to be more about 'Are you doing what you are supposed to be doing?', which is more towards pre-specification of input and process than the outcome end. Evaluation is a different thing again. It is harder to do, and is somewhat contentious in the academic world, and internationally. Evaluation can be described as the systematic determination of merit, worth, and significance. However those things are not easily measured. ERO has chosen to go down the evaluation track because it believes it can be the most constructively influential.

Sometimes there may be a temptation to focus on what one *can* get a grip on – that is, the information available. However ERO has found it useful to look more deeply at concepts like engagement, as they are important even if difficult to measure.

Resources

Refer to the Education Review Office website, www.ero.govt.nz . The resources describing the review process can be found at: http://www.ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/Review+Process

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%C2%A0in%20Schools

> *The aim of this day was to build on the previous day's discussions by proposing:*
>
> - *possibilities for measuring and reporting student engagement, and reviewing the difficulties and strengths of each approach;*
>
> - *some desirable and achievable approaches for measuring and enhancing student engagement in New Zealand tertiary education;*
>
> - *the operationalising of the measurement and analysis of engagement in ways likely to enhance national and institutional policy and practice.*

Review and preview

The day began with reports from chairs of the previous day's parallel sessions at which New Zealand initiatives 1-6 were presented. The chairs reported the issues arising from the discussion of each presentation; these are reported in this document at the end of each paper. (See p.23-37.)

The reports were followed by a summary of progress made on the first day.

Richard James summarised Monday's session as follows.

- There were no definitive answers to the questions that have been raised.

- The Symposium comprised a diverse group - government, agencies, institutes of technology and polytechnics, universities. The diversity gave strength to the discussion and outcomes.

- Participants had differing values and objectives.

- A 'one size fits all' approach was unlikely to be helpful.

- There needs to be an idea of engagement developed for the New Zealand context.

- There need to be approaches to measurement/analysis/reporting that are sensitive to the educational, social, and political contexts.

From this, Richard suggested there were four levels of outcomes possible.

- Individual professional development (take home ideas you will use yourself).

- New ideas for institutional development (participants discuss/seed new approaches within institutions/agencies).

- Emergence of collaborative possibilities between institutions.

- Development of principles for advancing the possibilities within sectors/nationally.

Hamish Coates suggested several possible projects that might be productive.

- The development of a lighthouse programme:
    - the preparation of a series of one-page case studies,
    - a focus on documenting different forms of best practice for enhancing engagement.

- The development of an engagement survey:
    - cross-institutional,
    - based on theory and validated for New Zealand.

- A focused study on engagement patterns in different student/institutional/course groups, providing a research study into patterns of engagement within and across different contexts:
    - intended to highlight diversity across contexts,
    - the collection of baseline data,
    - a lead to the identification of different approaches.

- The development of 'engagement co-ordinators' within institutions:
    - the formation of a learning community for the sharing of best practices.

- The production of staff development materials:
    - a non-prescriptive manual to inform staff development.

- The documentation of key indicators and underpinning conditions:
    - prepared for internal improvement activities.

- The preparation of a 'policy' statement:
    - a briefing document on the importance of 'engagement',
    - prepared for institutional and national audiences.

Options for New Zealand

***What should happen in New Zealand student engagement and its measurement and analysis?
What is feasible in terms of measuring engagement, weaving insights into institutional and
national policy and practice?***

Parallel workshops, with participants in four groups.
The four groups reported back to the plenary group.

REPORTS

Group 1

Actions

- Suggested purpose: evaluating student engagement to improve quality teaching and learning.

- Look at the possibility of integrating student engagement into existing quality assurance processes – and with a light touch approach.

- Engagement is student centred:
    - outcomes to benefit students,
    - one size does not fit all,
    - diverse institutions across the sector.

- Recognise the need for staff buy-in and think how to do that.

- Build on/transfer some of the Education Review Office principles into the tertiary sector.

- Build on what institutions are already doing well.

- Focus on enhancement and the sharing of ideas between institutions rather than on compliance.

Group 2

Principles of standard engagement studies

- To reflect the New Zealand context:
    - acknowledge indigenous model, and also holistic learning – that is, the spirit, emotions, physical,
    - acknowledge the different types of institution – region, rural/urban.

- Real and valid comparisons across disciplines:
    - employ different techniques to achieve engagement.

- Evaluate learning not just teaching:
    - both inside and outside disciplines – that is, within the whole institution,
    - different types of learning.

- Reduce lag-time by emphasising process rather than product.

- 'Whole person' education:
    - education for life,
    - citizenship education,
    - skills students will transfer into the social context outside the institution.

45

Group 3

Principles

- One size does not fit all, *but* there may be some agreed values.
- Engagement should be linked to outcomes.
- Establish clarity about engagement and its purposes.
- Build in consultation and feedback (multiple stakeholders).

Activities

- Map the concept and elements of engagement (include factors such as time) and consider multiple paradigms of learning and teaching and the way institutions operate with different cultural perspectives and different perceptions of the world.
- Map different levels of engagement, from the national level, to the institutional level, right down to departments, programmes, courses.
- Define the stakeholders and make an effort to evaluate whether that is happening.
- Spend more time on developing the principles of engagement.
- Establish a well-resourced programme of work based on the above.

Group 4

Overarching values

- Ethical
- Evidence-based
- Economics

Principles

- We care about student learning.
- We pay attention to student engagement in an aim to enhance the factors we know are important.
- We recognise that student engagement is part of a complex environment where additional factors contribute to student learning:
    - inputs → engagement → achievement.
- We recognise the role of professionalism and trust in educative processes:
    - trust in institutions to get on and do the job,
    - trust in academic staff,
    - trust within the sector.

Actions

- Measure the right things:
    - learning/engagement first and foremost.
    - customer satisfaction is a useful indicator but it is secondary.
- The National Centre for Tertiary Excellence might, as part of its agenda, focus on researching/developing *appropriate* measures of student learning, of which student engagement would be a part.

Guiding development

What are the challenges to make this happen?
What are the obstacles to overcome?
What opportunities and strengths are offered by particular approaches?
What can key sector groups do to guide and promote the development of student engagement in conversations about education quality?

Parallel workshops, with participants in four groups.
The four groups reported back to the plenary group

As a result of the material coming out of the reporting back of these workshops, Richard James summarised an action plan with four topics:

- **The need to define engagement and capture its dimensions for New Zealand.**

- **The need to integrate with existing processes, quality assurance, and the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.**

- **The need to learn from the Education Review Office approach.**

- **The need to embed in the culture; buy-in; defining the stakeholders.**

It was agreed at this stage not to include discussion on a fifth action point relating to what were the actual measurements and what would be measurement instruments.

Four groups were created, each one to discuss one of the topics.

Group 1

The need to define engagement and capture its dimensions

Four-step process:

- Literature base - best evidence synthesis on what engagement might mean.
  Action: Approach the Government for funding, or use, for example, the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI)

- Consultation round/research (New Zealand).

- Develop relevant case studies to illustrate different models and practice.

- From that develop a framework – collate 'results': institutions can use information to inform own measurement approach(es).

Two challenges were:

- To try to quickly influence the Government's agenda.

- The timing was crucial.

There had to be stakeholder commitment to the process of defining engagements in the above-mentioned four-step process.

Group 2

The need to integrate with existing processes, quality assurance, and the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Purposes of integrating the existing processes

- To enhance the quality of education and engagement.

- To share best practice and effective practice.

- To avoid being seen as just compliance.

- To introduce an idea of risk management.

- To ensure quality processes across the whole sector and identify gaps in those process or links between different areas of student engagement and quality assurance.

Framework for doing that

- Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP)/Tertiary Education Strategy 2007 – objective with respect to engagement to report.

- Universities incorporate it into their profiles; institutes of technology and polytechnics could include it in the ITPQuality audit reports.

- Providers to use whatever mechanisms they have to report back on that objective – profiles, ITPQuality.

- Appropriate agent or agency to undertake scoping exercise to identify gaps in existing systems. What are the challenges? What is important?

Plan – Mapping/Scoping

- Identify existing processes
    - internal – bottom up
    - external – top down

- Identify which processes would be best utilised for engagement within each institution or appropriate to the situation. To move away from compliance, ask the questions: 'What are you doing about engagement?' as opposed to 'How are you going to do this?' or 'We want you to show us something.' Externally do we go to the funding stream or the quality stream?

- There were different definitions of 'engagement' for different institutions/situations. This needs to be tied back to the definition of 'engagement'.

- Do not impose an answer. The answer is individual to each institution.

- It is a process.

Who could be involved in the process of integrating engagement into existing quality assurance?

- Identify agencies from across the sector with responsibility for quality assurance - New Zealand Qualifications Authority, ITP Quality, New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee, Committee on University Academic Programmes, New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit – and agencies with an interest in quality assurance – Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission.

- To take this forward should it be a multi-agency approach or different groups of agencies working together then co-ordinating their effort?

- Cross-institutional co-operation to get funding – i.e., Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), Innovation and Development Fund.

The role of the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence

- To provide advice and networking links.

- To identify effective and contextualised best practice.

Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (STEP)

- Already has some flavour of student engagement.

Profile

- Already report on QMS.

- Provides opportunity to report on student engagement.

Group 3

The need to learn from the Education Review Office approach

Challenges in adopting the Education Review Office approach

- The Education Review Office (ERO) framework is a useful starting-point, but needs to be adapted to tertiary education – for example, outcomes-focus, evidence base.

- Ask 'what are the purposes of education?' and link the answers to engagement.

- Create a framework (or more than one?). No one framework would fit all the different kinds of tertiary institutions.

- Different ways of implementing the framework:

    - Internal/external

    - Self-review

    - Quality assurance

    - Compliance/prescription

    - Peer review

- What happens after the framework is created?

- How would it be implemented? One method would be a self-review. Another would be the carrot and stick approach.

- How much power did the ERO report carry within the schooling system beyond it being a public document people could access and read?

- Evaluating, advising, and consulting were three different forms of review carried out in three different climates. For peer review to be successful there needed to be a climate of trust, openness, and where everyone was working towards common goals.

- Raising the awareness level about engagement, which began with defining 'engagement', then making sure that was known across the sector so it could be worked on.

- People may be resistant to new things and find a way around getting it done.

- Juggling all the demands and the fact it could be seen as just one more thing to do: retention, recruitment, international students, and now engagement.

- How much weight do we put on engagement in terms of that carrot and stick tool?

Raising Awareness

- Engagement

- Framework

Obstacles/Challenges

- Resistance

- Priorities
    - changing
    - how to manage/juggle

- Lack of understanding with respect to engagement

- Core beliefs about education vary

- Bureaucratic perceptions

- Giving engagement the appropriate weighting

Group 4

The need to embed in the culture; buy-in; defining the stakeholders

The challenges:

- There are multiple stakeholders:
    - students, staff (including support staff), industry and employers, the Government and Government needs and demands, governing bodies themselves made up of a variety of stakeholders, and iwi and community.

- Student diversity
    - postgraduate, distance, undergraduate, first year, part time
    - different styles of learning

- Teachers
    - overload/workload
    - critical to get their buy-in to the benefits of student engagement.
    - staff do not necessarily come to a university to be an outstanding teacher but perhaps because of outstanding research

- Changes in operating environment
    - technology – online learning
    - competing demands and desires of students

- Course design

The opportunities

- Students
    - because of student loans students are keen to get value for money. Students were capable of giving very direct and constructive feedback.
    - often focused on short-term goals versus lifelong learning so they are highly motivated in the short term and where the course takes them.

- Course design in terms of getting industry and employer relevance into the classroom so employers get graduates they can use.

- Teaching staff
    - raise the value of teaching so that already overwhelmed teachers will still say, 'I really want to focus on student achievement'; what is in it for them: promotion, money, a feel-good factor, professional development opportunities,
    - the University of Sydney had a raft of performance indicators to address that,
    - professional development,
    - areas staff want.

- Stakeholder link and collaboration
    - use employer feedback.
    - professional
        - at an early stage get professionals and employers into the classroom to confront students so the students know where the curriculum is taking them,
        - a lot could be learnt from the ITO sector in that regard,
        - get from employers what the transferable skills are that they require and start putting those into within the curriculum.
    - get past students to inspire.
    - Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics sector good practice.

- Changing operating environment
    - new ways to engage students (information technology),
    - track student progress.

Achievable goals

- Accept that we will not get 100% agreement on what student engagement means and how to go about it – 60% is probably acceptable and a good place from which to start moving forward.

- It is important that the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence puts student engagement high on its agenda and provides leadership and research into student engagement.

- Information sharing, collaboration, and networking between institutions and subsectors. This could start at any time.

- Use existing communication channels – media, newsletters – and make sure people are well informed about student engagement.

- Get teaching staff to move to value student engagement – by resource allocation, a database of available resources.

- Influence and challenge policymakers by actually contributing to policy papers, articulating and challenging, and putting forward suggestions.

An overview of the Symposium

*A personal overview provided by **Hamish Coates***

In summing up the two days of the Symposium, Hamish Coates gave his overview of the key issues.

- Participants have tried to establish common conversations and a desire to have institutional activities.

- Although the measurement issue has dropped off the radar, do not avoid the issue altogether.

- The idea of an engagement survey, in whatever form, seems to be on the table. It is a cheap and effective method of getting quality data.

- Assessment is part of education in the way students learn. It plays an increasingly important role in how we understand education as a mass activity in society.

- It is critically important to have very good data on which to base evaluations.

- It is important to take seriously the public demand for accountability.

- It is very important to have cross-sector conversations about the different issues.

- A lot of education is international in nature, not just the movement and mobility of students.

- International benchmarking is an important way to develop ourselves.

- Diversity does not mean incommensurability. Have cross-institutional conversations and do not focus on the difference. Help people explore the differences responsibly.

- It is important to understand the different engagement patterns of the diverse communities.

- Developing case studies is a powerful way of identifying good practice.

- Some teaching practices are unequivocally good and they can be documented. Some teaching practices are unequivocally bad.

- The development of engagement co-ordinators within institutions, and staff development materials.

- A lot of people do not share our insights and assumptions, so it is good to have things upfront in a prescriptive way.

- The documentation of key indicators and a policy statement is something that could emerge.

Advancing engagement

Facilitated by **Lorraine Stefani**

***What strategies and initiatives should be developed
to progress the analysis of student engagement in New Zealand higher education?***

It was important for participants to leave the Symposium feeling they had done something and that they are in a position to influence what happens next. Discussion on key actions was invited, which is summarised as follows:

- Review of literature – a synthesis and commentary on the New Zealand context.

- Ask peak sector bodies to recommend to the Minister that he direct Tertiary Education Commission to re-engineer the student learner survey and build on what has already been done.

- Ensure that quality assurance bodies within institutions embed/encompass engagement in their quality assurance processes.

- Identify leadership and make sure leadership includes Māori and is inclusive.

- Build engagement into the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence agenda.

- Reports, papers, and recommendations from this meeting, together with a request for buy-in and action, go to:
    - the Minister of Education
    - the Ministry of Education
    - the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee
    - Chief Executives and Vice-Chancellors
    - Institutional centres for teaching and learning
    - the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence
    - the Inter-Institutional Quality Assurance Bodies Consultative Group

- Any report from this Symposium be drafted as a briefing statement for key personnel, noting:

    - actions that can be taken

    - money to kick-start

    - what is happening in other countries

- Use the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) to provide a research-based starting point.

Programme

Monday 27 March
Contexts and possibilities of engagement

<div style="text-align:center">

Morning

Chairs and Facilitators

New Zealand contexts
</div>

Plenary discussion	**Richard James, Hamish Coates**	John Jennings

Explore issues, policies and practices in the current New Zealand context; consider possible and feasible responses to the question 'How should measures of student engagement be factored into conceptions of quality in New Zealand higher education?'

<div style="text-align:center">

Student engagement
</div>

Plenary presentation, discussion	**Hamish Coates** *The specification and measurement of student engagement*	Jan Osborn

Discussions of background materials centred around theories and perspectives on student engagement – define key terms, consider measurement possibilities, provide an informed but policy-neutral perspective for generating developments.

<div style="text-align:center">

Afternoon

International trends
</div>

Plenary presentation, discussion	**Richard James** *Some observations on the Australian experience of the national Course Experience Questionnaire survey and the national Learning and Teaching Performance Fund*	Tom Angelo

The current state of play regarding engagement and student experience research: what is the value of current activities for institutions, curriculum pedagogy, learners?

<div style="text-align:center">

New Zealand initiatives – 1
What is happening now in New Zealand – a discussion of New Zealand case studies
Parallel presentations
</div>

Room 1	**Linda Leach, Nick Zepke** *Improving tertiary student outcomes in their first year of study* **Kirsty Wallace, Colleen Slagter** *National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence* **Russell Butson, Sarah Carr, Gina Bosselman** *Engagement as a more helpful measure of student learning*	Lesley Campbell
Room 2	**Jerry Hoffman** *The integration of learning and study skills into the curriculum* **Helen Anderson** *Engagement: a shared responsibility* **Colleen Ward** *Engaging international students: what do students want? What do teachers need?*	Peter Osborn

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">***The measurement of student engagement: a New Zealand initiative***</td></tr>
<tr><td>Plenary presentation, discussion</td><td>**Syd King**
Evaluation indicators for student engagement in learning in schools</td><td>Val Jolly</td></tr>
</table>

Tuesday 28 March
Engagement in action

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">**Morning**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">***Review and preview***</td></tr>
<tr><td>Plenary</td><td align="center">*Review of Monday and the plan for Tuesday*</td><td>John Jennings</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">***Options for New Zealand***</td></tr>
<tr><td>Workshops</td><td colspan="2">*What should happen in New Zealand student engagement and its measurement and analysis? What is feasible in terms of measuring engagement, weaving insights into institutional and national policy and practice?*</td></tr>
<tr><td>Report back</td><td></td><td>Joey Randall</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">***Guiding development***</td></tr>
<tr><td>Workshops</td><td colspan="2">*What are the challenges to make this happen? What are the obstacles to overcome? What opportunities and strengths are offered by particular approaches? What can key sector groups do to guide and promote the development of student engagement in conversations about education quality?*</td></tr>
<tr><td>Report back</td><td></td><td>Janet Calder</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">**Afternoon**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">***Advancing engagement***</td></tr>
<tr><td>Plenary discussion</td><td>*What strategies and initiatives should be developed to progress the analysis of student engagement in New Zealand higher education?*
* *Document achieveable goals*
* *Identify actions*
* *Assign broad responsibilities*
* *Set broad milestones for monitoring and managing progress.*</td><td>Lorraine Stefani</td></tr>
</table>

55

List of participants

Name	Organisation
Dr Neil Haigh	Auckland University of Technology
Dr Patsy Paxton	Auckland University of Technology
Hamish Coates	Australian Council for Educational Research
Ms Shirley Porter	Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
Neil Miller	Business New Zealand
John McPhee	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
Ms Jo Blakeley	Eastern Institute of Technology
Syd King	Education Review Office
Marc Doesburg	Foundation Learning Otago Polytechnic
Ms Terry Neal	ITP New Zealand
Jan Osborn	ITP New Zealand
Dr Peter Osborn	ITP Quality
Ms Carol Cooper	Lincoln University
Ms Elizabeth Bean	Lincoln University
Dr Helen Anderson	Manukau Institute of Technology
Ms Shelley Paewai	Massey University
Kayrn Kee	Massey University
Dr Kogi Naidoo	Massey University
Dr Linda Leach	Massey University
Associate Professor Nick Zepke	Massey University
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Carolyn Holmes	Ministry of Education
Roger Smyth	Ministry of Education
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Ms Kate MacDonald	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Sue Walbran	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Ms Kate Rockpool	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Val Jolly	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Ms Janet Calder	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Belinda Middleton	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
John Jennings	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
Joey Randall	NZUSA
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Kirsty Wallace	Tertiary Education Commission
Dr Lesley Campbell	Tertiary Education Commission
Catherine Ross	The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
Dr Richard James	The University of Melbourne
Ms Rae Trewartha	Unitec New Zealand
Prof. Lorraine Stefani	University of Auckland
Ms Julie Trafford	University of Auckland
Dr Lane West-Newman	University of Auckland
Dr Billy O'Steen	University of Canterbury

Name	Organisation
Carole Acheson	University of Canterbury
Mrs Sarah Carr	University of Otago
Mr Russell Butson	University of Otago
Prof. Alister Jones	University of Waikato
Ms Dorothy Spiller	University of Waikato
Assoc. Prof. Jenny Harper	Victoria University of Wellington
Professor Colleen Ward	Victoria University of Wellington
Professor Tom Angelo	Victoria University of Wellington
Mrs Christa George	Waiariki Institute of Technology