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The Experience of Implementing an Interprofessional First Year Course for Undergraduate Health Science Students: The Value of Acting on Student Feedback

Abstract

This paper reports on the experiences gathered as a result of the foundation, implementation and on-going development of an interprofessional course for undergraduate health science students in The School of Health Sciences (SHS) at The University of Newcastle. The purpose of the course was to provide commencing students (n=600) with a transitional period, inclusive of academic, social and administrative support. The course also provided fundamental health related content relevant to all health science professions. Data in the form of student evaluations was collected over the three years of implementation through questionnaires, focus groups, university based student evaluations and unsolicited student feedback. A feedback loop was implemented annually and evaluations of the data applied upon reflection of student perceptions of the course. Findings suggest that despite some initial difficulties, the majority of students reported the provision of basic course and program specific information coupled with course coordinator support through immediate responses to questions assisted them to reduce their initial first year experience anxieties. Furthermore, students suggested that the student-centred changes made within this course be applied to other university courses. In conclusion, it is evident that the value of student feedback and the implementation of adaptations and rigorous change as a result of the feedback is highly significant in the improvement of courses and the ultimate satisfaction of student cohorts.

Keywords

First year experience, student feedback, interprofessional

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Introduction

The University of Newcastle's School of Health Sciences in Australia manages eight undergraduate professional health programs delivered over two campuses, Newcastle (Callaghan) and Central Coast (Ourimbah). The Year 1 undergraduate enrolment in the eight programs is in the order of 600 students. In view of the unique requirement for our graduates to be versed in interprofessional integration coupled with the overlapping similarities of fundamental content students require to meet professional and graduate attribute outcomes, the School proposed merging the profession specific first year courses into a single generic core course to be completed in first year, first semester.

Whilst each program results in students and graduates working in distinct areas of health, the requirement for interdisciplinary interactions between the professions is evidently clear. Creating an interprofessional learning environment has been shown to develop positive attitudes in students in relation to working cooperatively as well as augmenting individual's theoretical and practice-based knowledge (Colarossi & Forgey, 2006). Upon review of existing literature to substantiate the School's vision, it was found that introducing interprofessional education in the undergraduate context might potentially result in changes in the students' skills, beliefs and attitudes as well as knowledge in relation to their future professional responsibilities as team workers (Cooper, Carlisle, Gibbs & Watkins, 2001).

The course, 'Introduction to Health Sciences' included the following health professional disciplines:

- Diagnostic Radiography
- Nuclear Medicine
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Occupational Therapy
- Oral Health
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Radiation Therapy

The course commenced in 2007 and is now in the third offering. The course has undergone considerable change and development in its structure, delivery and direct student support mechanisms over the period of three years. This paper reflects upon the experience of the initial development of a cross-campus,

interprofessional, large group core course and the implementation and application of varying strategies and adaptations executed as a result of the student feedback. The paper identifies the critical value student feedback has had on the development and effectiveness of teaching successfully as well as the implications inherent with teaching a large interprofessional first year course in relation to the organisational and educational effort required.

Course Structure: An Introduction to Health Sciences

The first semester, first year undergraduate course offered within the School of Health Sciences (SHS) aims to enable students in their university progression with the provision of content in an interprofessional environment. The content had been previously included in separate courses in each professional program and delivered by different profession specific academics. In essence, material that was delivered to individual program cohorts was unified and delivered to the entire Year 1 SHS cohort. The course is delivered over a period of 13 weeks and includes a variety of delivery modes and academic representatives from most of the professions within the School.

The course provides students with an overview in health related areas of content as well as providing them with an academic skill base that aims to introduce students to the lifelong learning (LLL) paradigm. The content included within the course uses profession-specific clinical examples as a means of allowing students the opportunity to interpret the content delivered as it applies to their specific profession and in relation to interprofessional activities. The content is divided into nine modules and includes:

- Information Retrieval Skills
- Evidence Based Practice
- Academic Writing Skills
- Communication Skills
- Australian Health
- Australian Health Professionals
- Aboriginal Health
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Health, Law & Ethics

Content delivery is in the form of face to face lectures, tutorials and laboratories and is supported by the provision of an online learning system (Blackboard Academic Suite™, version 8.0, BB). Due to the cross-campus nature of the course and the large number of students, Blackboard serves the purpose of providing

students with access to recorded lecture series (each face to face lecture is recorded and loaded onto BB), a discussion board where they are encouraged to post questions as well as all other course related material.

The course is managed by a course coordinator and the content delivered by a combination of the coordinator and SHS academics who are typically experts in the module they present. While the weekly lectures are optional for students, they are strongly encouraged to attend. Equally, the face to face tutorials are optional but their benefits are made explicit to students throughout the semester.

The assessment for the course incorporates a blend of strategies and includes written assignments, skill demonstrations and exams. While the course is of a foundational genre, it is expected that students pass essential criteria throughout the semester and prior to proceeding onto profession specific academic and professional placement courses in second semester. The two items identified as essential criteria components include the occupational health & safety (OHS) module which seeks to enhance and develop students' understanding and skills in manual handling and infection control principles. The second essential criteria component is the academic writing assessment. This task requires students to identify literature that is relevant to the task and use academic conventions, inclusive of referencing styles and plagiarism standards, to write a 1000 word submission. The aims of the task include developing students' awareness of the importance of evaluating literature, increasing their understanding of the implications of plagiarism and developing their academic writing skills. The total assessment of the course is inclusive of the submission of the assignment writing task, attendance at the OHS laboratories and a final multiple choice exam.

A Core Course: The Generic Implications

The components of a core course are for the most part, ordinary in their content; a foundation of information to help the learner build their skills and ability. In the case of the core health sciences course, the content is based on the academic requirements of a health professional to progress within the various programs. Not only is it the first experience for a student in all that is academic foundations, but it is generic in its format and may be construed as less than interesting. Unfortunately, the importance of the content is monumental in the preparation of these undergraduates but does not equate to student appeal. Student engagement within any course results from a combination of strategies and when faced with uninspiring content, the task of engaging students becomes more complex.

If continuous personal development is at the heart of LLL then providing commencing students with the ability and skills to take control of their own development should be at the foundation of our endeavours as first year facilitators. In many ways we could characterise the learning patterns of commencing students with that of children. Children accept learning as an effortless attainment of information through their sheer desire to explore and become independent individuals. Parental responsibility, it would seem, is to provide the child with guided opportunities to confirm their abilities before allowing them to engage in a more complex activity. In much the same way, and from a humanistic perspective, it is a fundamental component of our teaching responsibilities to provide students with the information, guidance and support to initialise their learning journey.

The First Year Experience

It is well recognised that commencing students begin their First Year Experience (FYE) journey at the time they accept their university program offers (Ellis, 2002). This is sometimes weeks before the university academic year commences. In addition, the transitional period does not as previously thought, end at the completion of the first six weeks of university, but lingers through the entire first year, with varied seasons of marked intensity, and only ends once a student becomes a successful learner (Walker, 2001). Literature suggests that over time there has been little change in the number of students who experience a tentative start at university. This is attributable to a number of issues, none more apparent than the lack of accurate initial information. Furthermore, literature indicates that students share common issues in and around orientation week, including concerns with regard to their potential abilities to cope, fitting into university life, and apprehensions about the teaching styles they may encounter (Walker, 2001).

From an institutional perspective, it is essential for teaching staff to employ teaching strategies that will result in student engagement to ensure student retention. Additionally, unsuccessful transition ultimately results in a significant cost to the institute and the student, placing further pressure on the academics responsible to create, manage and successfully prove the worthiness of the course. However, from an academics' point of view, the success with which their teaching efforts and teaching strategies is measured is based on the outcome of enhanced learning for their students. These teaching strategies vary as a result of the student genre, cohort size and academic content as well as the academic stage at which the students are captured. The initial contact with commencing first year students is crucial and must be planned and executed with the applications of a myriad of evidence based, proven strategies, none more critical than the ability to

reflect on previous student feedback and take a resolute approach to implementing changes as a result of reflecting on their comments.

Collecting Student Feedback: Ethical Considerations

Ethics clearance for the collection of student evaluations of the course was sought and granted from the University Human Research Ethics Committee under the category of Quality Assurance Activity Proposal and deemed to be within the category not requiring official human ethics clearance.

The data collected does not identify participants and additionally students were informed that all responses to the surveys, focus groups or other feedback provided would be treated confidentially and anonymously. All students enrolled in the course were invited to partake in the collection of feedback however their refusal to do so was completely anonymous and hence had no impact on their grades.

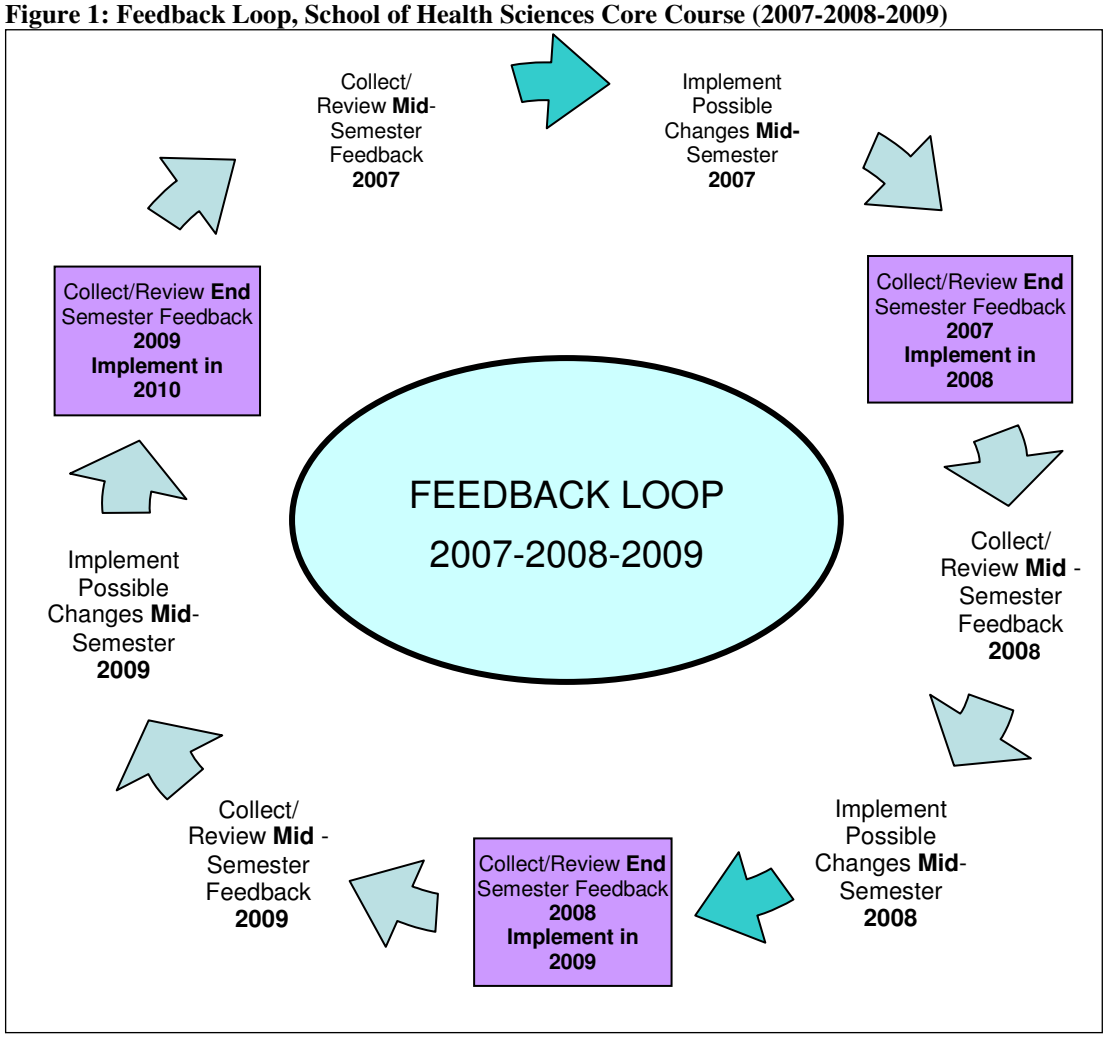
Collecting Student Feedback: Strategies

Student feedback included a combination of focus groups, online surveys, in-class requests for written feedback, unsolicited emails and posts on online discussion boards coupled with the official university evaluation of courses. The administration of the evaluations consisted of a mid-semester evaluation in the week 7 teaching week, and a final evaluation in week 12. Students were, throughout the semester encouraged to contact the course coordinator if they felt they wanted to provide feedback beyond the organised collection times.

As a result of a large cohort and the nature of the voluntary provision of the feedback, it was expected that the response rate would be low. In anticipation of such a phenomenon, strategies were planned prior to the initiation of the collection of feedback to encourage participation. The strategies included individual emails as reminders to students, face to face reminders at the commencement and completion of lectures and detailed explanations to better inform the students of the importance of their feedback on the development of the course. The significance of the feedback was emphasised with regard to the possibility of applying some of the requested changes within the current semester for their current learning context. As a result, student participation in the collection of data far exceeded expectations with responses in the realm of 60% (323/539) for an online mid-semester survey and 64% (345/539) for the official end of semester university evaluation of courses (2009).

The data provided by students was analysed and recommendations for changes that were provided by the students at mid-semester were considered by the course coordinator in combination with the Head of School and changes were applied wherever feasible. Results were analysed for a second time and in combination with the end-of semester collection of data and recommendations and changes to the course were compiled for the following year's cohort. These changes were presented on a yearly basis to the School's Teaching and Learning Committee for final endorsement. The feedback loop (Figure 1) has been in action for the three years since the course was inaugurated and seen many transformations in not only the methods of collecting data, but the changes the course has experienced as a result of the feedback.

Figure 1: Feedback Loop, School of Health Sciences Core Course (2007-2008-2009)



Adaptations Implemented Following Feedback: 2007-2009

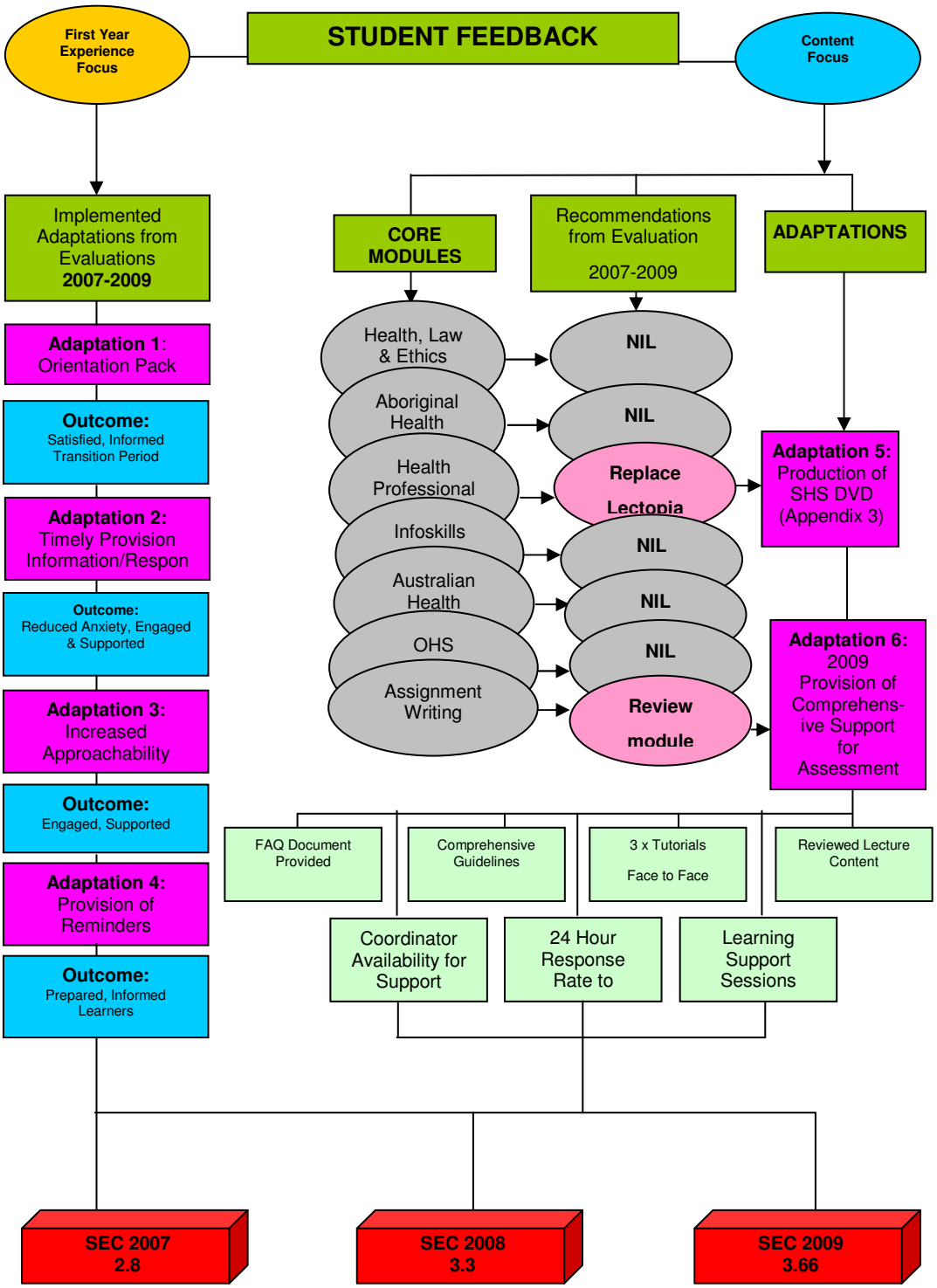
Student feedback in 2007 in relation to the core course included some comments that prompted the School to re-adjust our strategies and involvement. While there was hesitancy to include such feedback, it does, however demonstrate the incalculable importance student feedback has on the improvement of not only a course but of the facilitators involved.

"I seem to spend most of my time trying to work out where and what I have to find on Blackboard.' (Student Comment, Core Course, 2007)

During the first year of the core course, 2007, the course was navigated based primarily on educational theories. The cohort was managed as a group of 'adult-learners'; a self-directed cohort with the ability and motivation to learn. It was this mind-set that generated a sequence of poor evaluations and high student dissatisfaction. Following feedback, it became clear that students resented the lack of involvement in their learning and lack of orientation. It was with great regret and perhaps a certain amount of denial that we attributed our failings in 2007 to the course being new and requiring some minor adjustments for success. A further, thorough review following completion of the course in 2007 led to a series of identifiable student perceived needs being gathered and documented next to a series of recommendations for application in the following cohort. The recommendations of this 'post-mortem' document was reviewed by the existing Teaching & Learning Committee and identified as a useful tool in ensuring the adequate evolution and improvement of the course.

The following Figure (2) demonstrates a mapped depiction of the course in its developmental stages throughout the past three years and where adaptations to the course have been implemented. The development has considered the importance applied to student feedback, the varied teaching and learning strategies applied in view of aligning student outcomes with the LLL principles, the validation of the development of the course and the application of varied strategies to measured results in the form of student feedback (university implemented Student Evaluation of Course (SEC). Furthermore, it outlines the varied teaching and learning strategies applied in view of aligning student outcomes with the LLL principles previously observed.

Figure 2: Student Feedback Outcomes



As is identified in Figure 2, a number of changes or adaptations have been made as a result of student feedback. Following is a summary detailing some of the more radical changes and the student evaluations as a result of their implementation.

Adaption 1: Information Technology and the Orientation Pack

It became apparent after the initial year of inception (2007) that students suffered from varying degrees of anxiety directly related to the transition experience of university life and the expectation that they will engage in the Information Technology (IT) world that underpins tertiary education. Qualitative data collected from the Student Evaluation of Courses (SEC) in 2007 reinforced this, with 71% of responses from a possible 630 students relating to the anxiety experienced by students as a result of IT or more directly the finding of information they perceive as being important at that particular transitional stage of their university life.

The overwhelming comment identified referred to the students' acknowledgement of the university's expectation that they are indeed to be independent and adult learners – yet they asked for guidance and leadership in clarifying the frameworks and processes they require to make them autonomous learners. The use of technology often has unpleasant side effects including frustration, confusion and anxiety. In fact as reported by Rosen & Maguire, (1990) the irrational anticipation of fear evoked by the thought of using computers is now known as 'state anxiety'. Students commented on the poor timing of the orientation presentations and the need to access IT to find details about their timetable. For students to attend the orientation lecture in week 1 they would need to be versed in enrolment, accessing online content and viewing university email.

Overwhelmingly students were asking, in varied tones, for the same improvements. The feedback included:

- Provision of an orientation or 'care-pack' at the commencement of university (specific to SHS)
- Step by step instructions on how to achieve the requirements including enrolment, accessing university services (BB, email, library services)
- A point of contact for support

In response to the feedback, the 'School of Health Sciences Orientation Pack' was delivered via the post to students in 2009. The argument for forwarding the pack electronically was made in relation to the cost attributed to posting however it was

recognised that many commencing students may be disadvantaged as a result of their lack of IT skills and the ability with which they may access the pack. The document was delivered to each student upon registration of their acceptance of program (2-4 weeks prior to week 1 of university). The pack differs from the university's orientation information in that it is specific to the SHS student needs.

In producing the orientation pack, a multitude of services and staff were consulted in order to provide students with information on every facet of the requirements of their first year experience.

The information contained in the pack includes:

- Enrolment requirements for each program
- Orientation week activities pertinent to SHS students
- Registration for tutorials/laboratories
- Timetabling
- Online learning information
- Clinical placement information
- University policy
- Where to get help
- Program specific information
- Course information (core)

Following the implementation of the orientation pack, the students were given an opportunity to provide their perceptions of the usefulness of the pack through an anonymous, mid-semester online survey. Students overwhelmingly reported satisfaction with the orientation pack, with a total of 255 (78%) students (out of a total 328 respondents) agreeing or strongly agreeing with its usefulness. In addition, anxiety levels were also reportedly relieved as a result of the implementation of the SHS Orientation Pack in 2009, with 254 (78%) students (out of a total 327 respondents) agreeing or strongly agreeing that some of their anxieties as a commencing student were relieved as a result of the information and support provided by the orientation pack. The results of the survey justified what we are well versed in; student feedback is ultimately the framework through which improvement and feedback should be instituted.

Adaption 2: Reply to Student Emails and Blackboard Posts in a Timely Manner (24 Hour Guarantee)

Whilst many of us may be of the opinion that our current students are increasingly demanding of our time and attention as a result of the generation they were born in (Generation Y), the reality is that it is human nature that dictates our levels of anxiety as a direct result of uncertainty and confusion. Some of us may be better able to pause in wait of a response to our queries, however we all benefit from fast response times in relation to levelling our apprehensions and angst in unfamiliar situations. Evidence suggests that first year students require a higher level of consideration from facilitators with regard to the provision of 'just-in-time' information (McInnis, 1999).

The SHS core course delivered in 2009 included as part of its new 'adaptations' a guarantee to students that queries would be answered within 24 hours (or earlier) of receipt. Equally, the students who posted questions on Blackboard (University's online learning system) were to expect the same turnaround. As an add-on support service, the coordinator made themselves available following lectures for students to meet with one-on-one. Furthermore, and in contrast to the initial offering of the course in 2007, students were encouraged to make contact via phone if they were in need of assistance.

The feedback from students showed a marked favourable recognition of the expedited response rate and the positive impact this had on their learning and anxiety levels. When asked the question "My questions (emails, BB, discussion board, face to face) have been answered promptly by the course coordinator", 262 (82%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had been attended in a timely manner. Interestingly, zero (0) students disagreed with this comment. The following comment is representative of many of the comments made regarding this item;

"The online help/response is quicker than most lectures. A great deal of effort has been made and you notice that. It makes a big difference to the feel of the course."
(Student Comment, Core Course, 2009)

Adaption 3: Increasing Approachability and Encouraging Student Inclusivity through Mentoring of Support Staff

Tutorials form a large component of the course and as a result, tutors are required for delivery of the sessions. To ensure the adaptations and strategies within the course are not limited to the student interactions with the coordinator but also

extend to those with other involved facilitators, tutors are encouraged to build a rapport with their students (approximately 30 per tutorial session) with a view to creating a conducive learning environment. They are instructed to provide students with the opportunity to wear name labels at every session and encouraged to refer to students by name. Furthermore, tutors are provided with information pertaining to the course content and administrative requirements thereby equipping them to answer questions that may arise during tutorials.

Students were given the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the name labels and their perceptions of their use. Results indicated that 59% of students (from a possible 322 responses) strongly agreed or agreed that the use of the name labels encouraged interactions between students and staff and helped to create a better learning environment.

Adaptation 4: Informing Students of Upcoming Assessments, Compulsory Sessions and General Lectures

First year experience students differ from the other students (Krause, Hartley, James, McInnis, 1999). They require added support, provision of information and guidance to ensure a smooth progression and an engaged student body. While students are provided with access and direction through the BB online learning system, it is doubtful that they all use the system to its full potential. Focus group feedback has indicated that some students choose not to use BB for the purposes of 'finding answers' but rather choose to use it only when related to assessment tasks. While first year students are provided with a content timetable (posted on BB and emailed individually), a Course Handbook and the SHS Orientation Pack, the reality is that some students struggle with organisation. It is for this reason that students are also provided with a weekly email containing information regarding their progress in the course. Each Friday, students know they will receive an email outlining the requirements in the proceeding week. The email includes notice of lectures, compulsory tasks and other vitally important information.

Following the mid-semester survey, of the responding students when asked if they had been kept informed of course requirements in the course, 304 out of 327 (93%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had been informed adequately. Interestingly, and for the purposes of balance, some students commented that they were being spoon-fed and denied their right to be independent in their learning.

Adaption 5: Provision of Comprehensive Learning Support in the Preparation for the Written Assignment Task

Students enrolled within the course are required to submit a written assignment. The assignment serves the purpose of educating students in the areas of plagiarism, evidence based practice, referencing and academic writing skills. It is an essential criteria within the course and failure to pass the task results in a failure in the course overall. As a result of the essential pass component and the reality that many of the students have not had previous assignment writing experience, the task has in the past been noted to generate high levels of anxiety among some students. Whilst the failure rate remains relatively low in terms of the large cohort, (failure rates equate to 8% of the total cohort in 2007, 11% in 2008 and 6% in 2009) the impact a failure has on students is significant with regard to their confidence and progression in the program.

With a view to ensuring students were supported and provided with adequate foundations for the successful completion of the task, and based on prior student feedback on the assignment writing module provision of information, guidelines and effectiveness, the module was re-developed in 2008 and again in 2009. Following is the student feedback and how each area has been reviewed and re-developed. Evaluations of the changes are also included below.

(1) Clearer Guidelines and Directions

Students reported a need for a clearer set of guidelines and directions to aid them in the writing of the assignment task. In response, the assignment writing module within their Student Handbook was re-developed and simplified to meet their needs. The following assignment writing aids were included within the Handbook for student reference;

- Assignment writing format example
- Previous student paper (de-identified) as an example
- Description of question requirements, including ideas of issues to be included when answering task
- List of topics pertinent to each profession as a ‘starter guide’
- Marking criteria (rubric)
- Marking guidelines
- Step-by-step guide on online submission

Reports following student evaluation in 2009 demonstrated overall students were satisfied with the level of direction provided through the module within the Handbook with 73% agreeing or strongly agreeing when asked if the Handbook module contained the information they required to help them work through the task. Only 11.8% of students out of a possible 321 disagreed or were undecided.

(2) Consistency in Feedback from Markers, Lecturer, Coordinator and Tutors

Consultations were initiated between the coordinator and the lecturer delivering the assignment writing module to ensure the provision of information to students on the module was consistent. Concurrently, documents used for the delivery of the module were identified, reviewed, compared and altered to ensure the information provided within the lectures, tutorials, Handbook or in response to emails and BB discussion board were consistent.

(3) Provision of Assignment Writing Tutorials Directed at Preparing Students for the Task

As a means of supporting students on a face to face basis, three (3) tutorials were provided based specifically on the assignment writing task. The tutorials were developed in 2007 in response to and for the purposes of remediating student anxiety in the lead up to the task. Whilst originally (2007) assignment writing tutorials aimed to allow students the opportunity to practice the skills learnt in the content lectures, including evidence based practice, referencing and formatting, the new tutorials were also embedded opportunities for direct and immediate feedback from tutors, and equally, peers. The tutorials included:

Tutorial 1: Critical appraisal of an article
Tutorial 2: Reviewing and marking a previous student paper
Tutorial 3: Bringing in partly completed assignment for peer and tutor review

Students were asked to report on their perceptions in relation to the 'help' the tutorials provided them in the preparation of their assignments. Students reported their perceived satisfaction in relation to the tutorials by answering the following questions (Figure 3):

Question 24: "Critical Appraisal of article. This tutorial was helpful in preparing me for the assignment writing task."
Question 25: "Reviewing and marking a previous student paper. This tutorial was helpful in preparing me for the assignment writing task."
Question 26: "Bringing in a partly completed assignment writing task for peer review. This tutorial was helpful in preparing me for the assignment writing task."

Figure 3: Mid-Semester QA Online Survey 2009

Tutorial	**Content**	Strongly Agreed, Agreed	Undecided	Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed
Tutorial 1	**Critical Appraisal of an article**	54%	29.3%	16.4%
Tutorial 2	**Reviewing and marking a previous student paper**	64%	25%	10.8%
Tutorial 3	**Bringing in partly completed assignment for peer and tutor review**	49%	37.7%	13.4%

Overall whilst the majority of responses demonstrated student satisfaction, it was clear that some students did not see the benefit in the tutorials. Upon investigation of this result, *comments* provided by students demonstrated a marked trend toward the dislike of peer reviewing of their assessable items. The tutorials and concept of peer review is now under review for the 2010 cohort.

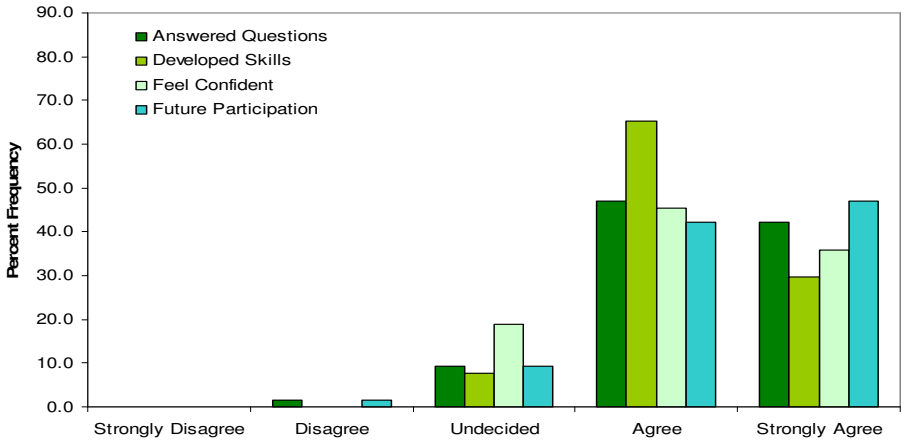
(4) Learning Support as an Add-On to Assignment Writing Task Preparation

The University of Newcastle Learning Support Service (LS) (Centre for Teaching and Learning) provide a variety of student academic support services. At the completion of 2008 it was decided that the purposeful inclusion of LS would benefit to the SHS students by providing them with opportunities for feedback and guidance on their assignment task.

LS sessions were organised specifically for SHS students and relevant to the assignment writing task. The sessions were held at both campuses to ensure access for all students. While the LS service is publicised through the university's web site, it was considered important and beneficial to advertise the sessions directly to the students through individual emails, BB announcements and face to face delivery of reminders during lecture time slots. This was done in keeping with Adaptation 4 "Informing Students of Upcoming Assessments, Compulsory Sessions and General Lectures". In total, LS delivered a series of nine (9) sessions.

As a result, the LS sessions for SHS students in 2009 were the most well attended of all LS sessions organised in semester 1, university-wide. Furthermore, SHS participants were asked to rate on a five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, whether the LS session was helpful in answering their questions with regard to the writing assignment task. Students were also asked if it enabled them to develop useful and relevant academic skills that are applicable to the writing assessment, if they felt more confident about completing the writing task after the session and whether they would like to participate in another course-specific LS session in the future. Of the 65 participants, most strongly agreed or agreed with these statements though a few were undecided or disagreed (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Responses about the helpfulness of sessions run by Learning Support staff (N=65)



Conclusion

The review of this core course highlights student perceptions of the course from its initial year of conception through the subsequent years. The student requests and recommendations for improvement bear common threads, including requests for the provision of clear and definitive guidelines in relation to assessment and other university expectations, access to immediate information and responses to their queries, and finally, explicit requests of access to academic support in the form of a face to face provision of an approachable and accommodating individual.

It is evident that tending to the needs outlined above by implementing varied strategies has paid dividends in terms of the student measurable satisfaction with the course over time. This reinforces the importance of student contribution on the development of courses. Feedback collected in 2007 and 2008 served the purpose of re-developing the course by way of implementing major changes to

organisational, supportive and academic areas. The official university evaluation of course results for each year have shown a positive trend toward greater acceptance of the course.

While the outcomes have been favourable in terms of student satisfaction measures, it must be acknowledged that the changes have occurred over an extended period of time and not without a substantial amount of effort in the form of time dedicated to the development and implementation of such wide ranging strategies. In view of the importance of the course content and the challenge of university transition for first year students, the SHS committed a full time academic to fulfil the role and dedicated a large percentage of budgetary expenditure to the management of the course. The results of student feedback regarding the course indicate that these efforts were worthwhile and enhanced the student learning experience.

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