Student engagement and student satisfaction: Two measures auguring for independent review criteria or standards for student support services in national quality assurance schemes

Dr. Fernando F. Padró (Senior Lecturer, Quality)
Dr. Y.C.M.A. Kek (Senior Lecturer, LTS)

INQAAHE 2013 Conference
Subtheme 2: Innovative Approaches to External QA in Tertiary Education: Not a Single Approach towards Excellence
9 April, 2013, Session 2-5-1
Introduction of issues
Defining Student engagement
The problem: should engagement be a formally separate component of QA standards/structures?
The embedded expectations of QA frameworks regarding student engagement.
An institutional response: An example.
Focus of the paper/Hypothesis

- Student engagement data is not identified as a key element in QA frameworks/standards, but is embedded within the student learning/learner outcome output area.

- Challenge: Student engagement as a throughput function is capable of capturing data that can help increase the focus of institutional performance from a learner rather than organisational focus.
Typical functional elements of an HEI

- **Academic Programs**
- **Student Services/Support**
- **Business Affairs**
Defining student engagement

- Hu and Kuh (2002):
  ‘the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes ...’ (p. 555).

- The question is whether the emphasis should be customer service or student development. These are not the same issues and provide a different set of indicators and outcomes.

- Complicating the issue is the link between student engagement and student satisfaction, the proxy for performance excellence (Padró & Frederiks, 2013).
Distinction between customer service and student development

- The customer service model focuses on satisfaction as a judgment based on fulfillment response (Oliver, 2010). The analytical framework is transactional in nature emphasizing the easily identifiable (Burns, 1978).

- Student engagement, as a service consisting of acts and interactions characterized as social events (Sureshchandar, Rajendaran, & Kamalanabhan, 2001), looks at these events from a service quality perspective of:
  - tangibles,
  - reliability,
  - responsiveness,
  - communication,
  - credibility,
  - security,
  - competence,
  - courtesy,
  - understanding/knowing the customer, and
  - access (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).
Student development framework: emphasis is on the student as a whole or in a holistic manner. Importance is given to applying ‘human development concepts in postsecondary settings so that everyone involved can master increasingly complex developmental tasks, achieve self-direction, and become interdependent’ (Miller & Prince, 1976, p. 3, italics in original).

‘Without a developmental philosophy at the core of the college, it can become a dispensary of services, a training ground for jobs that may not exist, or a holding tank for those not sure what to do next’ (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 44).
Distinction between customer service and student development (continued)

Chickering & Reisser, 1993: 7 vectors of learning

- Achieving competence
- Managing emotions
- Moving through autonomy toward interdependence
- Developing mature interpersonal relationships
- Establishing identity
- Developing purpose, and
- Developing integrity

CAS Standards (2012) student learning model

- Knowledge
- Acquisition
- Construction,
- Integration and application
- Cognitive complexity
- Intrapersonal competence;
- Humanitarianism and civic engagement; and
- Practical competence
Arguing for a student development approach toward data collection & analysis for QA

- Satisfaction (one of the key measures of student learning) is more than the end-result of a cognitive process, it is also based on an affective response (Gray & Diamond, 2010).

- Embedding student engagement from a developmental perspective may be seen as providing indirect evidence of learning; however, indirect evidence, i.e., as a proxy derivation or indirect observation of learning that has occurred, the process capturing and analyzing the data can be more powerful than direct evidence (Massy, Graham, & Short, 2007).

- Evidence comes in the form of pursuing different assessment strategies such as learning, developmental, and program outcomes in addition to developing rubrics (Mason & Meyer, 2012).
Evolving focus of accreditation and accountability

Inputs:
Student Credentials - Admission Selectivity/Test Scores
Faculty Credentials - Percent Ph.D.s, Reputation Ratings
Resources - Student/Faculty Ratio, Library Holdings, Athletic Facilities, Endowment & Funding per student

Processes:
Programs Offered and Populations Served
Faculty Teaching Loads and Class Size
Facilities Use Data, Library Circulation Statistics
Student Support Services Offered and Used
Teaching Quality and Student Ratings of Instruction
Standards for the Conduct of Research
Planning and Efficient Use of Resources
Curricular Requirements
TQM/CQI
Time to Degree

Outputs:
Student Grade Point Averages
Degrees Awarded & Graduation Rates
Faculty Publications & Patents
Research Expenditures

Outcomes:
Student Learning & Growth
Student & Alumni Accomplishments
Faculty Citations & Honors
Research Impact
Economic Development

source: Volkwein, 2011, p. 6
Astin’s (1985) I-E-O model: University outcomes for learning

‘Students learn by becoming involved...’ [S]tudent involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience... [I]t connotes more than just a psychological state; it connotes the behavioral manifestation of that state. (Astin, 1985, pp. 133, 134, 142).

Inputs:
- Student demographics
- Family backgrounds
- Academic & social experiences students bring into campus
- Institutional resources
- Programs/Qualifications
- Other Ur-Management inputs

Engagement with campus environment

Outcomes:
- Changed student characteristics
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Values
- Beliefs
- Behaviours

source: Adapted from Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Birnbaum, 2000
Student Academic Student Support (in classroom/courses)

Non-Academic Student Support – outside classroom/courses (SPARS, The Learning Centres)

Inter-connected Learning

Academic Student Support (in classroom/courses)

Outcomes

Externally Connected Learning (SPARS)

External Environments
- Economic forces
- Demographics
- Globalisation
- Technology
- Government Policies
- Accountability/TEQSA


Evaluation updated v 2013
Key to developing an analytics framework

- AUSSE/UES
- Grades
- Graduation rate
- Persistence
- Retention
- Student demographics
- Student satisfaction data
- Transfer rates

- Co-curricular student engagement activities data
- Learning Centre data
- Other student learning support activities data

Identify Tier 1 data – that which exists (technical analytical)

Form Tier 2 data – Issues intelligence

Create Tier 3 data – Context intelligence

National policy preference

Institutional emphasis for data collection & analysis:

Customer service (transactional) or Student development

Adapted from Terenzini, 2013; Padró & Frederiks, 2013)
Balancing act between Australian regulatory expectations

TEQSA Regulatory Risk Framework (RRF)

AQF

TEQSA
Assessment leading to the award of qualification rests with HEI. Responsibility is for ensuring the quality of learning outcomes & meeting qualifications for degree.

Appropriate learning outcomes: knowledge, skills, acquisition of knowledge and skills.
SPARS

Pre-USQ (Future student)
Commencing/First Year (Current student)
Later Year (Current student)
Graduate Ready (Current student)

Shaping Aspirations
Admission & Integration
Involvement & Retention
Graduate Transitions

Evidence and Theoretical underpinning - human development theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and student engagement cycle (Coates & Ransom, 2011)

USQ CRM & SRO Processes

1. First Contact
- Personalised learning needs assessment & identification
- Series of questions/adaptive testing

2. Learning Action Plan
- Personalised pathway to resources and support
- Personalised action plan generated

3a. Preventive Interventions
- When no actions taken by students
- Early alerts
- Reminders

3b. Assertive Interventions
- ‘At-risks’ students
- Flags to academics

4. Closing the Loop
- Feedback from student
- Surveys

5. Multi-channel Communications
- Email
- Chat
- Internet
- Social networks
- Etc future

6. Reporting & Analytics
- Reports produced
- Data intelligence for retention management

Academic Supportive Learning Environment

TLC Resources
TLC Consults – F2f & virtual (Smart-thinking)
TLC Workshops
Meet-Up & variations of student peer support
USQ Open/OERs
USQ Other Services Resources e.g. Library, Counseling, Career, etc
Faculties
Beyond USQ - MIT, iTunes U, Other Universities, Khan Academy,

Connect students throughout student academic journey
Target retention/progression/engagement with single-entry access to SPARS developed using USQ CRM
Integrate academic learning resources and support

SPARS Updated – 2 August 2012

(Source: Kek, 2012)
Connections for a more comprehensive analytics framework

SPARS analytics

- AUSSE/UES & CEQ
- Student demographic & performance data
- University/Unit performance data (warehouse)
- Other institutional data (non-warehouse)
References


Questions anyone?
Thank you very much. If you have any questions, please feel free to email either of us at:

megan.kek@usq.edu.au

fernando.padro@usq.edu.au