Structuring an Undergraduate Accounting Theory Course to Enhance the Learning Experience of Australian Students: Preliminary findings

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Introduction

- Low levels of student satisfaction
- Drive for more relevant accounting curriculum
- Emphasis on higher order skills
- More creative types of learning
- Improving student engagement in accounting issues
Threshold Learning Outcomes

Freeman and Hancock (2011)

- Judgement – under supervision
- Knowledge – integrate theoretical and technical knowledge
- Application Skills – apply theoretical and technical skills
- Communication and Teamwork – communicate advice and ideas
- Self-Management – reflection and self-improvement
Learning Experience

- Positive learning experience
- Deep learning and surface learning
- Contextual learning
- Student-centred learning orientation
- Linkage of theory to practice
- Alignment of course objectives
Accounting Theory

- Qualitative nature
- Historical, Conceptual
- Theories that underpin practice
- Relevance to financial reporting
- Incentives for preparers
Accounting Theory course

- Accounting and Society
- Effective communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking and judgement skills
- 109 students in S1, 2015
  - 18 Springfield on-campus
  - 11 Toowoomba on-campus
  - 80 External including 22 in China
Accounting and Society – Resources 1

- Learning Management System (Moodle)
- Textbook selection
- Lectures – actual vs. dedicated
- Tutorials – selection of questions
  - Recall type
  - Contemporary issues
  - Case studies
Accounting and Society – Resources 2

- Lecture examples – practical and real-world
- Sources: Internet, YouTube scholastic sites e.g. CPA Australia, Universities channels
  - Ball and Brown 1968
  - Professor Ray Ball on share price movements
  - Corporate collapse - ABC Learning Centre
  - Earnings management example
Accounting and Society – Resources 3

- Additional readings – summaries, literature reviews, latest developments
  - Corporate Collapse
  - Corporate Governance
  - G4 GRI
  - Accounting standards

- Sources: Academic journals, Accounting periodicals e.g. CPA Journal, In The Black, Newspapers e.g. Australian Financial Review
Accounting and Society – Assessments

- Formative – Online quizzes
- Summative – Online Test
- Summative – Assignment
  - Summarise article
  - Research on conceptual framework
    - IFRS CF latest developments
- Case studies
- Summative – Exam (multiple choice and short answer, discussion, issues)
Course Evaluations

- Course Evaluation forms
- Evaluation on Resources, Assessment and Administration of course
- Rating 1 (Strongly disagree) to Rating 5 (Strongly agree)
- Overall response rate of 22%
## Evaluation results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>I had a clear idea of what was expected of me in this course</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>My learning was assisted by the way the course was structured</td>
<td>4.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>As the course progressed, I could see how the various topics were related</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>I was satisfied with how the course was taught</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>I am satisfied with this course</td>
<td>4.13</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>My learning was supported by the course resources</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>The use of examples in this course assisted my understanding in this course</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>My learning was supported by the course feedback</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>My learning was supported by the teaching in this course</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>It was easy to navigate around the StudyDesk for this course</td>
<td>4.35</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Assessment tasks were appropriate to this course</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Assessment tasks contributed to my learning in this course</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>I found the assessment in this course reasonable</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Ratings of course were above/well above the school, faculty and university numbers
Student responses 1

- It was a fun learning environment
- Learning activities were clearly defined
- The most enjoyable and informative course for me yet
- Recorded lectures were clear, relevant, concise, not recycled and were clearly laid out
Student responses 2

- Resources were well organised. Other supplementary resources are actually relevant to each module. This class has been a pleasure to take.

- This is truly a capstone course. I pieced together everything that has been learnt in previous courses and has given me an understanding of Accounting Theory.
Limitations

- Evaluations from small sample of students
- Limited response rate
- Response bias
- Differing student interpretations of questions
- Impact bias
Further research and conclusion

- Further research on
  - Drivers of good student learning experiences
  - Relationship between course components and development of generic skills
  - Teaching and learning effectiveness characteristics
- Aspects of teaching methods and resources and association of positive learning experiences
- Incorporate relevant supplementary materials, current real-world examples and case studies