

The quest for quality: Introducing the Quality University Enhancement Student Transition Project

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Abstract

Many people involved in Higher Education in Australia are currently discussing the many issues related to the quality of the large and complex field known as 'international education'. This is not surprising, given that in 2003, a total of 136, 807 international students were studying onshore in Australia with another 73, 590 students enrolled offshore (Morris, 2004). Of particular importance to the students and their families, as well as to Australian academic and support staff, are the students' perceptions of the quality of the teaching and learning experiences provided for them in Australian universities. In the project described in this paper – the QUEST Project – the research on the approaches to learning of both local and international students detailed by such writers as Ramburuth (2000) has been given a curriculum focus as the issues surfaced by students are translated into teaching and learning strategies. The paper describes the ways in which focus groups were used to gather undergraduate students' perceptions of their Semester 1 experiences of learning at an Australian university. An overview of the ways in which staff members have worked together in a collaborative model to make adjustments to the program in order to address the issues raised by the students has also been provided.