Exploring the elusive shape of service outcomes: Reflections on evaluating academic language and learning support services

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Student Learning  Te Taiako
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Today’s presentation

- Evaluation in Higher Education
- Evaluation in student services contexts
- Student Learning Te Taiako – a case study
- Interactive activity
- Towards developing an evaluation framework
- The next step
Evaluation in Higher Education (HE)

1) HE institutions are under increasing pressure to demonstrate tangible evidence of their performance.
   (Suskie 2006; Lomas 2007; Duque 2013; Franco-Santos, Rivera & Bourne 2014; Chalmers & Hunt 2016; Alach, 2015).

2) Purpose of outcome evaluation can be unclear
   (Harvey & Newton 2004)

3) Outcome evaluation can reflect a “clash of cultures” and is a ‘game’ leading to “tokenism, reputation management and image control”
   (Chalmers & Hunt (2016: 27))
Evaluation in Higher Education (HE)

4) Institutions can build quality frameworks, and systematic evaluation can lead to an improvement in education quality and student outcomes or achievement.

(Tucker, Pegden & Yorke 2012)
Evaluation in academic learning advising contexts

1) It is difficult to establish connection between learning advising and academic outcomes

2) Need to build “culture of evaluation” (McCann & Sato, presentation at AALL Symposium 2014)

3) Need to take control of evaluation (Hilsdon, presentation at AALL Symposium 2014)

4) Good evaluation adds to professionalism (Macdonald, 2006)
Student Learning Te Taiako

- One-to-one appointments
- Study skills workshops
- Maths & Stats support
- Workshops for international students
- Postgraduate seminars
- Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS)
- Cross-cultural communication programme
- Conversation class
- Support for Refugee Background students
- Grammar workshops
- Resources
- Orientation programmes
- Faculty requested workshops
- Staff training
An evaluation project at SL

• The original evaluation project
  (See Reid & Gao 2015)
  - one-to-one consultations
  - peer observation
  - triangulated with student feedback and self reflections

• Question – how can we evaluate impact?
Reflection

What does evaluation look like in your institution?
Towards developing a framework

- A good framework needs to be based on guiding theory of academic advising practices
- Evaluation needs to use research based criteria
  
  (Prebble, Hargraves, Leach, Naidoo, Suddaby & Zepke 2005: 53-54)
- Evaluation should start with clear mission statement
  (Cuseo, n.d.)
- Service objectives should link to wider institutional goals
Towards developing a framework

• Evaluation should be a regular part of best practice

• A comprehensive set of evaluation tools is required
  – multiple methods of data collection
  – views of all stakeholders included
  – voices of students who do not respond to surveys (Tucker, Pegden & Yorke 2012)
  – or who do not use the service
Towards developing a framework

- Evaluation should reflect contribution to both social and academic aspects of student experience
Summary

SL plans to create a framework for future evaluation practice which

• is based on research and theory
• aligns SL objectives to institutional strategies and student experience indicators
• links objectives of individual programmes to SL objectives
• sets clear evaluation guidelines that stipulate frequency of evaluation
• defines tools that collect both quantitative and qualitative data from all stakeholders
• specifies how evaluation results should be distributed.
References


Harvey, L. and Newton, J. (2004), ‘Transforming quality evaluation’, *Quality in Higher Education*, 10:2, pp.149-165.


