

Developing an Effective Tracking and Improvement System for Learning and Teaching

Achievements and Future Challenges in Maintaining Academic Standards

Mahsood Shah and
Sue-Ann Stanford



This Session at a Glance:

Setting the Scene: an overview of private higher education in Australia and overseas

Case study of a tracking and improvement system used by one private higher education provider

Future challenges for the private HE sector in maintaining academic standards



Introducing the Think: Education Group

- ❑ Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, and an English Language College
- ❑ Colleges located in NSW, Queensland and Victoria
- ❑ 5 ,000 students
- ❑ Courses delivered in the areas of Business, Design, Hospitality, Counselling , Psychotherapy, Natural Therapies and English language
- ❑ Focused on *Applied Education*



An International Perspective

Global increase in private higher education

Provides an alternative pathway to a qualification

Closely aligned with industry, employers and professions

Possess some unique characteristics

Currently 150 private HE providers in Australia

20.8 % increase in student enrolment in HE from 2007 to 2008

Predicted that by 2010, 30% of student enrolments in HE will be in private higher education



Why bother with a Tracking and Improvement System?

Learning and teaching is the core business of private higher education

Imperative to track learning and teaching performance to identify areas of good practice and those areas needing improvement

Students have a key role in quality and improvement

Changing landscape for Australian education suggests the need to have such systems in place.

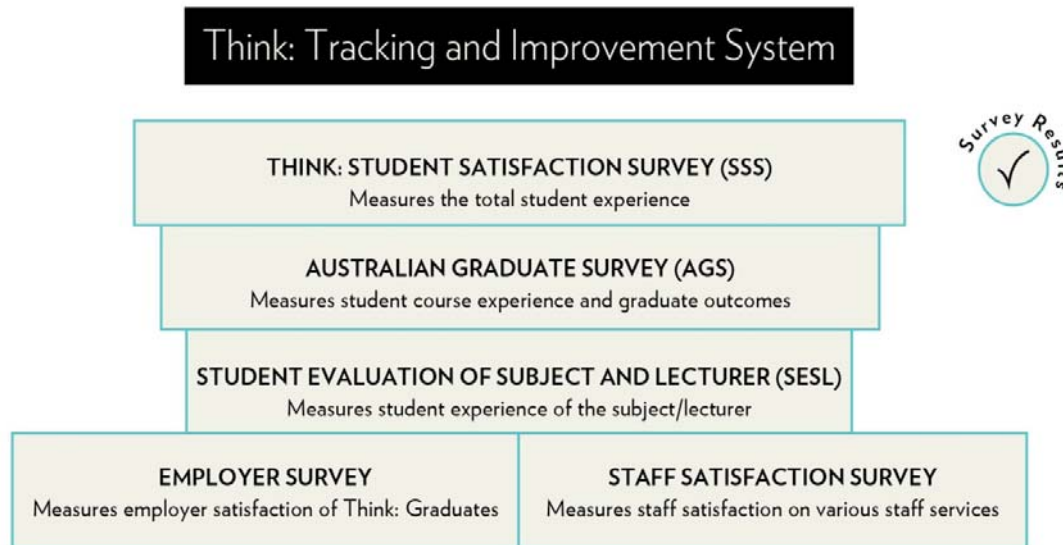


Rationale for developing a tracking and improvement system

- Institution wide self review
- Recommendation to improve the overall tracking and improvement system
- A consistent approach in all 7 colleges
- Use of common questionnaires for benchmarking performance data
- Using data to inform improvements



The Tracking and Improvement System



Quantitative measures

- ❑ Student Satisfaction Survey: measures total student experience
 - ❑ 13 core CEQ items are used to benchmark current and graduating student experience
- ❑ Australian Graduate Survey: measures course level experience
- ❑ Subject and Lecturer Survey: single instrument at subject and teacher level
- ❑ Employer Survey: measures employer satisfaction on key employability skills
- ❑ Staff Satisfaction Survey: measures staff satisfaction
- ❑ Key Performance Indicators: trend performance data on 15 indicators



Qualitative measures

Five yearly institutional re-registration by State Govt

Five yearly course re-accreditation by State Govt

Course advisory committees

External assessment moderation with 2 public universities

Five yearly internal self review and external review

Have Your Say feedback & qualitative comments from surveys



From *Compliance* to *Improvement*

VET sector is a *compliance* driven culture

HE is a 'fitness for purpose', continuous improvement culture

Tracking and Improvement System provides evidence of those areas that need improving:

Triangulation of data (surveys, KPIs
Have Your Say, and internal/external
review results)

Discussions with Head of Colleges on agreed
actions/improvements are endorsed by the Quality Committee



Communicating with students: *closing the loop*

**FEEDBACK:
IT MATTERS**

THINK: EDUCATION
GROUP

BILLY BLUE
COLLEGE OF DESIGN

Think: Colleges conducts regular student surveys. Your feedback enables us to identify areas of good practice and areas where improvement is needed. As a direct result of your feedback in 2008, we are in the process of implementing a number of key improvements in 2009 to ensure a positive learning experience for all students and staff. Below are the key improvements in your college.

THE COLLEGE IS IN THE PROCESS OF:

- > Upgrading computers in the classrooms & multimedia software packages
- > Increasing the availability of space in self access student space
- > Refining assessment tasks, leading to clearer communication of expectations
- > Recruiting two additional Program Directors to manage new courses and to allow more time for student consultation
- > Improving communication with students via the Edu Blog
- > Continuing to provide professional development opportunities for lecturers in teaching and learning areas

Your feedback is important to us and we look forward for your participation in future surveys. This is a quality improvement initiative by Think: College and the Student Representative Council (SRC). Please forward any feedback/comments to Mahsood Shah at: mshah@think.edu.au

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Does it add value?

- New system
- Provides timely and reliable performance data
- Benchmark performance data at overall, course and subject/teacher level
- Appreciated by Head of Colleges
- Using data to inform improvements
- Subject and teacher evaluations reported within 4-5 weeks
- Dialogue and engagement of academic staff based on the results of the teacher and subject surveys



Think: Colleges AUQA Audit 2009

- ❑ 9, 10, 1: outcome

- ❑ Commendations directly linked to the topic of this paper:
 - ✓ institution wide self review
 - ✓ industry engagement in course development
 - ✓ teaching staff commitment to engaged learning
 - ✓ external assessment moderation
 - ✓ processes in place to systematically use stakeholder feedback to improve teaching quality
 - ✓ institutions approach to quality management and benchmarking



Academic Standards and Future Challenges: Private Higher Education

Key challenges include:

- Institutional governance
- Academic leadership
- Reliance on sessional lecturers
- Research and culture of critical inquiry



Academic Standards and Future Challenges: Private Higher Education *cont..*

- Developing and maintaining rigorous academic processes
- Balancing growth with sustaining academic standards
- Consistent approach to assessments; robust assessment systems



Academic Standards and Future Challenges: Private Higher Education *cont..*

- Admission criteria, including managing transparent systems for the recognition of prior learning
- Equity and diversity
- Course delivery methods that allow student to achieve learning outcomes



Conclusion....

- The growth of private higher education is inevitable
- Fierce competition with universities in the same market
- Global recession has seen a rise in student enrolments
- Government policy such as FEE-HELP played a key role in the rise of student enrolments
- Work to be done on ensuring comparable standards between university and private HE
- Need for robust government regulation and accreditation
- TEQSA and its powers will have significant impact

Questions



Thank you.

