CONSIDERATIONS ON TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES
- ON THE AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT -

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Summary

Tensions between teacher-led and research-led activities are becoming more significant as Higher Education institutions are increasingly aware of adopting the appropriate strategies to enhance teaching and learning programs. This paper aims at gaining an understanding of major drivers of change and possible implications to structural and pedagogic arrangements.

A case study based on web search and document analysis was conducted to understand how a benchmark institution understands - and leads - the change towards strategic learning and teaching processes. Despite the complexity of the topic and limitations of the research, institutional strategies towards learning and teaching can be inferred from this study – in particular, on the interconnections between academic standards, assessment framework for teachers and the institutional strategic plan. Also of note is the fact that this particular institution is actively engaged on national discussions on the topic and leading collaboration on research that is setting the grounds for most of the strategic decisions of the Office for Learning and Teaching (OL&T).

It is argued that minding either institutional strategy, organisational arrangements and approaches to pedagogy can be a valuable and productive way for addressing current and future issues in teaching-led activities within Higher Education Institutions.

1. Overview of the Australia Higher Education sector under economic drivers of change

Complex dynamics driving the Higher Education sector around the globe have been mostly characterised by elements of government regulation, results-driven accountability and labour market demands (OECD, 2013, 2012, 2010a, 2010b; Salmi, 2009; Spring, 2008; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007;). These aspects of change together have been pushing institutions to rethink their strategic planning, to draw new structures, to reassess staff training and core academic qualifications (Henry, R.; Marshall, S; & Ramburuth, 2013). It is implied that the way institution are organized will depend on how sensitive and responsive institutions are to these changes (Salmi and Altbach, 2010). This is also the case of the Australian Higher Education system - universities in particular – where drivers of change are briefly developed as follows:

First, structural reforms based on the Bradley Report (Bradley, 2008) have moved the system from autonomy and self-accreditation towards centralisation and regulation by government agencies and professional bodies. Employability skills and graduate capabilities have been increasingly influenced by professional bodies, external agencies and networks (Henry et al, 2013; Norton, 2012) where labour market demands are driving the ever-shrinking government funding agendas.
In addition, the demand for **improvement of overall student performance** - while serving more **diverse student populations** - is driving institutions more accountable for results. Measurement of outcomes already in place in other parts of the world have been adopted. Pressures imposed by the economy (OECD, 2013; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2007) are driving discussions on the changing nature of teaching and learning (Universities UK, 2012; OECD, 2010a), with graduates attaining both knowledge and capabilities to ensure good access to employment.

On top of that, the economic driver is a big punch. While addressing student aspirations, labour market demands, government agendas and employer and community expectations, universities were left to “*decide for themselves how and when those cuts will be made in their institutions*” (Henry et al, 2013, p. 17). The University of Melbourne, for instance, has recently announced the dismissal of 540 administrative jobs - where academic support services would be either centralised or automated\(^1\) - as part of a $70 million savings program. Such scenario is unlikely to change, as recent government reforms\(^2\) introduced new budget adjustments and a massive cut around $ 2.3 billion out of funding to higher education.

Facing the need of “*significantly streamline their operations and asset base*”, while “*incorporating new teaching and learning delivery mechanisms*” (Ernst and Young Australia, 2013; Deloitte, 2012) universities are adjusting their structures towards a more strategic-oriented focus.

2. **Research-led versus Teacher-led – implications for organisational arrangements**

Australian universities reflect the dynamics and complexities of their environment. Profiles vary on location, international orientation, teaching and learning and student profile, research involvement and knowledge exchange (Coates et al., 2013). However, given the current trends leading funding directions and performance, two basic orientations still prevails - to whether teaching-led or research-led organisational structure.

There is no denying of the importance of both research and teaching to a knowledge society. However, Norton (2012) states on the complexities of the issue:

> Though there are potential synergies between teaching and research, the two are also rivals for limited academic time and resources. This could disadvantage students. In Australia the limited published studies find a negative relationship between research performance and student satisfaction.  

Indeed, the need for response to government directions, academic quality, competition and so on has its implications. As it could be observed in Table 1, the interplay between universities and the current ecosystem is briefly organized according to strategic orientation and the possible impacts on organisational structure.

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\(^1\) See, for instance: [Melbourne University to cut 540 administrative jobs](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-05/melbourne-university-to-cut-540-jobs/5503108), Updated Thu 5 Jun 2014, 7:20pm AEST.

Table 1: Mapping of institutions’ response to Rankings and OLT awards and grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECOSYSTEM INFLUENCES*</th>
<th>Research-led strategy</th>
<th>Teaching-led strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Political and economic stability, rule of law, basic freedoms</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic Integrity: Partnering with international institutions in promoting academic integrity posed by the digital revolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vision, leadership and reform capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>• E-learning platforms and benchmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Governance and regulatory framework</td>
<td></td>
<td>• T &amp; L Centre’s facing increased workload on teaching and awards (unpacking criteria, principles, polities, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality assurance and enhancement</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cohesion challenges - on aligning institutional approaches to teaching and learning with departments, faculty and teaching views (Sutherland-Smith &amp; Saltmarsh, 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Articulation and information mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resources and incentives;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Telecommunications and digital infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Salmi and Altbach, (2011)

| Organisation | • Merge with another institution, or bring together discipline complementary departments | • Professionalisation of the academic workforce, performance based in teaching and learning processes and outcomes |
| | • Incorporate autonomous institutes into host HEI | • Wide use of frameworks and coherent benchmarks to address effectiveness in higher education for 2020 and beyond has been designed and is currently being tested. |
| | • Establish Centres-of-Excellence & Graduate Schools | • Harmonize with EUUS models |
| | • Develop/expand English-language facilities, international student facilities, laboratories, dormitories | • Teaching-only positions – personalizing teaching and learning (teaching portfolio); |
| | • Establish Institutional Research capability | • Increased workload and need of time allowance for T&L planning and preparation |
| | | • Learning Analytics: Implications about individual student outcomes but also far reaching perceptions of educators about learning, teaching and assessment. (Siemens, 2013) |
| | | • Mapping the student experience cycle |
| | SJT = 40%; Times = 20% | |

| Faculty | • Head-hunt international high-achieving/HiCi scholars | • E-learning: Technology modes vastly increasing possibilities and nature of value-added experience. |
| | • Create new contract/tenure arrangements | • Student Experience: Providing a 21st century student value-add experience. |
| | • Set market-based or performance/merit based salaries | • Enhancement of student support services, expansion of focus outside learning and teaching, based on identification of students’ real needs. |
| | • Reward high-achievers | |
| | • Identify weak performers | |
| | SJT = 40%; Times = 25% | |

| Curriculum | • Harmonize with EUUS models | • E-learning: Technology modes vastly increasing possibilities and nature of value-added experience. |
| | • Favour science/bio-science disciplines | • Student Experience: Providing a 21st century student value-add experience. |
| | • Discontinue programmes/activities which negatively affect performance | • Enhancement of student support services, expansion of focus outside learning and teaching, based on identification of students’ real needs. |
| | • Grow postgraduate activity relative to undergraduate | |
| | • Positively affect student/staff ratio (SSR) | |
| | SJT = 10%; Times = 20% | |

| Research | • Reward faculty for publications in highly-cited journals | • Outcomes-based intensive - Academic collaboration with international and local institutions on teaching and learning aspects, peer reviewing; strong focus on student impact and outcomes |
| | • Publish in English-language journals | • Wide use of analytics on data and student surveys on the learning experience |
| | • Set individual targets for faculty and departments | |
| | SJT = 40%; Times = 20% | |

| Students | • Target recruitment of high-achieving students, esp. PhD | • Graduate Employability: To ensure graduates are equipped with necessary skills to meet the needs of employers and the economy, low SES are particularly important to support and promote Government policies |
| | • Offer attractive merit scholarships and other benefits | • Recognition that Student Experience has a high co-relation between retention and attainment rates of students. |
| | • More international activities and exchange programmes | |
| | • Open international office | |
| | Times = 15% | |

| Public Image/Marketing | • Professionalize Admissions, Marketing and Public Relations | • Professionalize Admissions, Marketing and Public Relations - Institutions increasingly aware and making use of teaching and learning results as recognition of excellence and quality in learning and teaching |
| | • Ensure common brand used on all publications | |
| | • Advertisements in Nature and Science and other high focus journals | |
| | • Expand internationalisation alliances and membership of global networks | |
| | Times = 40% | |

The left side of the Table 1 shows how research-led strategies are framed by The Australian Research Council (ARC), the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) and Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). National research priorities and standards through are delivered through a strong and centralized research governance that leads the “pressure to publish” (Norton, 2012; Klopper & Power, 2014), with highly quantitative performance measures. Competitive grant schemes geared towards national priorities are also focused on international rankings. Under the research-led punch for international research competition, teaching might be considered “lower status”.

Universities were progressively moulded towards this ecosystem and transformed into strategic corporations engaged in international competition (Hazelkonr, 2013; Rauhvargers, 2013). In fact, international comparisons on higher education are heavily based on research production and academic reputation. Institutional leaders might be tempted to make decisions based on strategic competition - at times to the expense of teaching and learning quality.

However, intuitions cannot afford to oversee teaching and learning quality. Chart 1 explains one of the reasons. International education (mostly undergraduates) represents a massive source of export income to Australia - and a substantial boost to most universities budgets. This is particularly so in the case of NSW, were the influence of international students accounted for $5.344 million in 2012.

Despite optimistic projections for a growing demand on international education, educational leaders are aware of the challenges that the sector faces, in particular on significant competitor changes3. The rise of a diverse range of new providers, delivery methods, types of programs and the increase in competition from traditional and emerging host countries is inevitable (Universities UK, 2013). Also of concern is the rapid development in technology-enabled learning and the need to respond to a new diverse student population along with increasing projections of the local student population.

On top of that, the mapping of student experience, graduate attributes and outcomes - the need to ensure graduates are meeting the needs of employees and the economy - are likely to generate batches of data to be comparable locally and internationally (Siemens, Dawson & Lynch, 2013). All topics lead to the current national discussions on teaching and learning trends, led by the Office of Learning and Teaching (OL&T).

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This is becoming apparent as institutions follow the national orientation towards a teaching-led strategy, on the right side of Table 1. Change in this case is led by the OL&T’s *Promotion of Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* by means of grants and awards to academics, commissioned innovations programs and development of leadership capabilities. Innovation, good practice, collaboration and improvement of student outcomes are driving new policy directions for the enhancement of learning and teaching.

Clearly, new synergies seem to be emerging on the adoption of powerful learning strategies by universities. In many aspects, OL&T awards and grants are becoming a key influencer to HE Institutions. For institutional leaders under the complexities and threats of their particular system, however, it might yet represent another challenge on seeking the balance of growth with quality; access with excellence; growing demand and competition – while keep on working towards research excellence.

While there is a long way to run, this investigation clearly points to collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, focused on innovation and learning enhancement.

3. **On Learning and Teaching Strategies– a study case on UWS**

Key drivers of change in education are based in elements of socio-constructivist approaches and on recent studies on how students learn (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Laurillard, 2002; Bocconi, S., Karmilos, P. G., & Punie, Y., 2012). There is a clear change of focus “from the teacher to the process of teaching” and the outcomes-based learning experience. In short, teaching is becoming a science.

Drivers of change in teaching and learning are posing new challenges to institutional leaders, in particular on organisational arrangements and change management (Sadler, 2012; Sutherland-Smith & Saltmarsh, 2010). Recent findings (Devlin, 2012) on a national investigation on leadership strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning in institutions are presented in Table 2. Under seven major headings, the study is organized on how institutions are delivering their learning and teaching agenda – which is clearly aligned to the OL&T general directions on awards and grants.

A case study based on web search and document analysis was conducted to understand how a benchmark institution leads the change towards learning and teaching processes. Despite the complexity of the topic, The University of Western Sydney seems to observe the national goals for teaching and learning – particularly on aligning organisational strategic priorities with the priorities of the OL&T.

What’s more, it also seems to promote good ideas on the best uses of learning technologies and the capacity to deliver them – consistently and well. The next session present some of the key findings on the subject.
Table 2: Drivers of change in Teaching and Learning and implications to universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key drivers of change in Teaching &amp; Learning</th>
<th>Institutional Arrangements</th>
<th>Key directions on OLT Awards and Grants&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trends in Educational development over recent decades.</td>
<td>- Efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning are aligned with the strategic direction of the university;</td>
<td>Attributes of successful OLT applications could be described, as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning</td>
<td>- Senior executives support teaching and learning enhancement, and resources for those improvements are allocated as part of the university’s planning and budget cycle;</td>
<td>- Had a clear focus and scope;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasis from change tactics to change strategies</td>
<td>- Staff workload allocations allow time for innovation, enhancement and improvement in teaching and learning;</td>
<td>- Identified how the project fits within the larger context. e.g., national review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A changing focus from quality assurance to quality enhancement</td>
<td>- Effective institutional leadership proactively manages tensions between discipline research endeavours and efforts to improve teaching and learning;</td>
<td>- Had identified an issue that they could pick up, explore and develop;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A changing focus also from 'fine-tuning' of current practice to transforming practice in new directions</td>
<td>- Teaching and learning are supported by relevant research and scholarship conducted within the institution and in collaboration with other institutions and relevant bodies;</td>
<td>- Collaborated with others in higher education sector;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emergence from a focus on the classroom to a focus on the learning environment</td>
<td>- A distributed teaching and learning support structure exists within the institution and is coordinated from the centre; and</td>
<td>- Demonstrated a level of astuteness, commitment and energy for the project;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changing emphasis from individual teachers to a focus on course teams and departments, and also leadership of teaching</td>
<td>- Mechanisms to recognise excellence in teaching and learning and to enable teaching and learning career pathways are in place.</td>
<td>- Had clear measurable outcomes;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Source: Attributed to Elizabeth McDonald (2008), who was the Director of Programs and Networks at the ALTC.

3.1 Institutional profile

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) is a young and rapidly growing university located in Sydney's Greater West region - with over 40,000 students, UWS reputation for research and academic excellence have been constantly rewarded by the OLT awards and grants as a benchmark in leading lecturers and innovative teaching. Endorsed academic standards and quality framework under the new TEQSA agenda, relates to its teaching and learning qualification standards, assessment framework connected to strategic planning and strong focus on information and research on learning outcomes.

3.2 Teaching and Learning Strategies – Key findings

❖ Academic Standards and Assessment Framework for Teaching and Learning

- UWS Academic Standards and Assessment Framework is grounded on interlocking domains of teaching and learning - design, delivery, support and impacts on academic learning standards.
- Elements of T&L design also connects with the student experience, mapping relevant KPIs on student performance and impact. These set of elements together clearly drive decision-making processes, leading to the strategic use of performance results.
- T&L Assessment framework connects to strategic planning and organisational outcomes.

❖ Strategic Planning for Teaching and Learning

- UWS’s strategic planning for T&L is a holistic process that clearly sets the context to the organisational strategy and institutional plan - it also connects to the OL&T priorities;
- Medium term-strategic programs are guided by long-term strategy and institutional mission, vision and goals.
- Table 3 presents an adaptation between UWS’s Strategic planning and Assessment Framework for teaching and learning. Staff career development programs are clearly connected to the UWS strategy as part of a holistic process.

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5 See, for instance:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Western_Sydney

6 See, for instance:
http://www.uws.edu.au/strategy_and_quality/sq/planning_and_review
## T&L IMPACT

**Objective:** Students - optimise student access, engagement, retention and success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Learning Standards:</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VALIDATION</strong></td>
<td>1. Implement a strategy to ensure the viability, sustainability and success of first year advising, orientation, transition and mentoring initiatives across UWS.</td>
<td>1. Equity group participation rates</td>
<td>1. Commencing student retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RETENTION</strong></td>
<td>2. Adopt a targeted approach to integrating academic literacy and numeracy support in each School.</td>
<td>2. Undergraduate and postgraduate coursework student retention and progression rates</td>
<td>2. Widening participation – low socioeconomic status and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT QUALITY</strong></td>
<td>3. Ensure that student engagement, retention and success data - particularly in relation to demographic sub-groups including international students, high achievers, students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways students - inform course and School improvement plans through the Annual Course Review process.</td>
<td>3. University Experience Survey overall satisfaction rates – first and final year</td>
<td>3. University Experience Survey overall satisfaction rates – first and final year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRESSION</strong></td>
<td>4. Engage strategically with TAFE Institutes, private providers and UWSCollege to enhance pathways, to widen student access to UWS and to ensure the robustness and quality of our articulation and partnership arrangements.</td>
<td>4. UWS Commencing student survey overall satisfaction rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPLOYABILITY</strong></td>
<td>5. Outcomes – Graduate Destination Survey: Employment (%), Further study (%)</td>
<td>5. Outcomes – Graduate Destination Survey: Employment (%), Further study (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FURTHER STUDY</strong></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## T&L DESIGN

**Objective:** Curriculum and Standards – implement a curriculum characterised by innovation, engagement and excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Design Standards</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RELEVANCE</strong></td>
<td>1. Initiate the project “create@UWS - Curriculum renewal for excellence and transformative education@UWS” - comprising a holistic approach to curriculum review and renewal and incorporating the strategies below.</td>
<td>1. Proportion of courses with evidence of integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge</td>
<td>Evidence of course quality improvement using Annual Course Review indicators, including Graduate Destination Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVE LEARNING INCLUDING eLEARNING</strong></td>
<td>2. Implement an academic program management strategy in each School, taking account of the UWS priorities of flexibility, engagement and sustainability.</td>
<td>2. Proportion of units with evidence of engaged learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THEORY-PRACTICE LINKS</strong></td>
<td>3. Review teaching models, learning designs and the alignment between course learning outcomes and assessment practices in all courses.</td>
<td>3. Proportion of courses involved in external peer review and moderation of learning standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPECTATIONS CLEAR</strong></td>
<td>4. Integrate standards-based approaches to assessment, peer review and moderation of learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Continue to deliver and evaluate targeted induction programs for new academic and sessional staff.

2. Provide targeted, ongoing professional development to enhance the teaching, assessment and curriculum design skills of academic and sessional staff.

3. Provide professional development for leaders of learning and teaching, particularly Directors of Academic Programs and Academic Course Advisors.

4. Align academic staff support with the UWS Academic Standards and Assessment Framework and School curriculum enhancement priorities.

5. Review the promotion policy to ensure that academic staff are appropriately recognized and rewarded for scholarly leadership in learning and teaching.

6. Develop and implement an academic staff career development framework that includes support for academic staff pursuing teaching-focused roles and guidelines for collegial peer review of teaching and curriculum.

7. Expand UWS’s success rate in the Commonwealth Office for Learning and Teaching grants and awards scheme.

8. Cultivate opportunities to share good practice and innovations in learning and teaching across UWS.

4. Proportion of units offering blended and online modes of delivery

Source: Adapted from UWS Academic Standards and Assessment Framework and UWS Learning and Teaching Plan 2012-2014
**Importance of Learning Outcomes Standards (LOS) and of Learning Analytics**

Impacts on Learning Outcomes Standards are considered to increase focus on validating the National Standards Panel. LOS\(^1\) also takes into account:

- The National Qualification Framework,
- The University’s mission and its desired graduate attributes;
- Learning outcome standards determined by ALTC discipline groups (UK subject benchmark process, AHELO, etc.);
- External professional accreditation standards (when applicable);
- Employer feedback; inputs from External course advisory Committees;
- Results from inter-institutional benchmarking;
- Academic input, peer review and moderation;
- Key capabilities identified by successful early career graduates;
- The results of school/department reviews;
- The learning outcomes for courses of the same name in other places;
- Government policy and funding incentives;
- What parents, prospective students & others rate as most important;
- Etc.

Note: Implied here is the increased use of surveys and evaluations instruments monitoring of student engagement across different groups in different contexts (Siemens, Dawson & Lynch, 2013). It may also be suggested that:
- Analytics driving action to increase student outcomes
- Evaluating impact driving action;
- Clarifying what is a valid standard and measure the capabilities of graduates (focus on proving and improving quality).

**National Leadership in L&T and a Research-intensive T&L Centre**

UWS leads a range of national discussions and is engaged in research on teaching and learning are leading projects on OL&T collaboration, with strong connections being established locally and internationally. Some initiatives on UWS Learning and Teaching\(^8\):

- Benchmarking the UK and Australian QM Framework & apply them to EJs initiatives;
- Establish a common tracking improvement system to enable benchmarking for improvement;
- Engaging the disengaged – applicability of the change implementation & leadership research to EJs;
- Evidence of demand - identify new careers/specialisations fro graduates and backwards map to the curriculum & assessment
- Clear focus on what retains students in productive learning;
- Using the campus & region as a living laboratory for action learning;
- Peer review of learning & teaching standards (LaTS) project (8 universities involved, three other partners, discussions with TAFE and Private providers and international collaboration)
- Need for change capable institutions that can manage growth and capacity to deliver with quality;
- Endorsed academic standards & quality framework by TEQSA and OLT;
- Increasing importance of outcomes - not just inputs -, action and agreed improvement areas;

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\(^8\) See, for instance: http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/398620/1earning_Stds_Framewk_Final_Dec_2012.pdf
http://www.uws.edu.au/idvceducation/idvc_education/academic_quality_and_standards/learning_and_teaching_standards/about_the_project
http://www.uws.edu.au/idvceducation/idvc_education/academic_quality_and_standards
http://www.uws.edu.au/learning_teaching/learning_and_teaching
The UWS system for Tracking and Improving L&T (TILT) focus on what counts – academic standards, measure importance as well as performance, both qualitative and quantitative;

- Annual course diagnostic reports and action plans;
- Leadership programs – Productive uses of learning technologies – research on university student engagement & retention. Useful to have a framework to indicate the use of components of a broader learning system.
- Promoting leadership of change to support the culture;
- The UWS Tracking and improvement System for L&T is on the AUQA good practice database Leading the National assessment moderation project
- Etc.

*Robust Academic support*

A robust academic support backs of staff induction/orientation program, Library, Learning Guide Standards, an adequate staff selection and training, and respective learning support standards. Academic staff improvements are connected to rewards, capacity building, leadership programs and professional outcomes.

- Building a quality environment for using learning technologies is particularly emphasised institutional campaigns, from interview and demonstrations on the website and wide use of multimedia resources.
- Focus on performance of its students, and the ultimate measure of its success is the quality of its graduates.

3.3. Discussions on the findings

Working towards learning and teaching models and best practices means more than just structuring a range of elements of teacher performance and management leading to effective quality teaching.

In line with the concepts *Learning Organisations*, the whole idea of effective *learning environments* is embedded in a systemic framework. It considers aspects of technology, people, culture, reflection and assessment (Wagner, T. & Dobbin, G.; 2009). The locus is on the dynamics and interactions between subjects (learners, teachers and other professionals), content or subjects, and also facilities and technologies involved.

The role of culture for instance is also crucial to understand “both the culture that exists on campus and the kind of learning an institution wants to cultivate” (Wagner et al, 2009, p. 13). This way effective learning environments are closely linked to structures and activities appropriate to the way students and institutions view learning.

Despite the complexity of the topic and limitations of the research, institutional approaches towards learning and teaching strategies can be inferred from this study. While there is still a long way to run, findings of this investigation clearly points to collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, focused on innovation and learning enhancement.
4. Conclusions

Distinctions between teaching-led and research-led activities are becoming more significant within the Higher Education sector as institutions are increasingly aware of adopting the appropriate organisational strategies to enhance their teaching and learning programs. This paper aimed at gaining an understanding of major drivers of change and possible implications to structural and pedagogic arrangements.

It is argued that minding either institutional strategy, organisational arrangements and approaches to pedagogy can be a valuable and productive way for addressing current and future issues in teaching-led activities within Higher Education Institutions.

A case study on document analysis was conducted to understand how a benchmark institution leads the change towards learning and teaching strategic processes. Despite the complexity of the topic and limitations of the research, institutional strategies towards learning and teaching can be inferred from this study – in particular, on the interconnections between academic standards, assessment framework for teaches and the institutional strategic plan.

Endorsed academic standards and quality framework under the new TEQSA agenda, relates to its teaching and learning qualification standards, assessment framework connected to strategic planning and strong focus on information and research on learning outcomes.

Also of note the fact that this particular institution is actively engaged on national discussions on the topic and a lead collaborator on national research that is setting ground for most of the strategic decisions of the Office for Learning and Teaching (OL&T).

New synergies seem to be emerging on the adoption of powerful learning strategies by universities. In many aspects, OL&T awards and grants are becoming a powerful influencer to HE Institutions. For institutions under the complexities and influences of their particular system, teaching and learning represents another challenge on seeking the balance of growth with quality; access with excellence; growing demand and competition – while keep on working towards research excellence.

While there is still a long way to run, findings of this investigation clearly points to collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, focused on innovation and learning enhancement.


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