

The effectiveness of first year embedded, blended learning development programmes within a university setting

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Academic preparation courses for assisting student learning and retention is nothing new as most tertiary institutions in New Zealand and the rest of the world are well aware of. What is new however, is the necessity to change the approach taken by student learning centres in their pursuit of higher retention and successful first year experience as we enter into an era of computer literate students who are at ease in handling both face to face instruction and the challenges of online activities and learning. Te Tari Āwhina at AUT has developed a system of short integrated, blended courses called Keys (Keep Enhancing Your Success) to introduce students to new skills and environment.” Such skills may need to be developed over a period of time, starting with meaningful induction into the new academic culture and with staged activities which enable students to explore and learn the skills required to fully participate in classroom discussions and engage in the discourse of their discipline” (Handa and Fallon, 2006, p9). In addition to generic Keys courses, Te Tari Āwhina has been offering integrated study skills courses in the faculties with much success which involve collaborative learning and a blended delivery of classroom teaching and online activities. By embedding academic support activities into faculty programs, and teaching academic reading and writing in the context of specific areas of study , the courses offer greater relevance and meaning to learners. “One of the many benefits of such collaboration is that faculty come to “discover” the wealth of knowledge that advisors and other student affairs professionals bring to the discourse about teaching and learning” (Tinto, 2000, p4). The goal of such a program is to enhance and extend the classroom experience of learners and to help them acquire skills to cope with university life and continuous lifelong learning. This workshop intends to stimulate discussion on some of the challenges that embedded, blended delivery courses present..

Statement of Workshop Objectives

To discuss and collectively brainstorm the effectiveness of embedded, online or blended learning programmes that address the needs of learners in today’s tertiary institutions.

Activities

The session will cover the following activities:

- A short introduction and report of current practice at AUT
- Pair activity on the practices and experiences of own institutions
- Group brainstorm regarding the usefulness or ineffectiveness of embedded/ online/ blended learning programs in tertiary settings.

Maximum Number of Participants

60

Intended Audience

Academic staff in the area of student learning