

Diversity

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Who are
our students?

We all know the dimensions of 'diversity' but

Who is in your classroom?

- ① *What life experiences have they had?*
- ① *What degree of academic preparation?*
- ① *What are their expectations?*
- ① *What information have they already received before they get to the classroom?*
 - *at offer?*
 - *at orientation?*

In designing FY curriculum

Do we start with the content

Or

Do we start with the students?

Engagement is a continuum

‘Need to enable ‘joined-up’ *institutional approaches*, enacted by effective partnerships across academic, administrative and support areas

Once 1st semester starts, the key is to mediate as many institutional interactions and as much ‘engagement’ as possible *through the curriculum.*’

Kift (2008)

‘Nowhere is involvement more important than in the classrooms of the campus. First, for many campuses the classroom may be the only place students meet each other and the faculty ... Second, learning is central to the college experience and the root source of student success.’ Tinto (2008)

Some strategies for

A partnership approach to curriculum design

Take four students...



Information Technology



- It's a while since I did any study, esp maths or computing
- I need a degree to advance my career
- My mates think I'm crazy
- This class is full of 18 yr old males ... who am I going to talk to?

Induction into the discipline

- ⦿ Curriculum design doesn't assume pre-knowledge or aptitude with computers (needing to be a 'geek')
- ⦿ Exploring career pathways in IT
- ⦿ Case study learning – providing broader context and including skills like conflict resolution and communication skills
- ⦿ Mentoring by other mature-age student
- ⦿ Informal contact with staff
- ⦿ Activities to build a sense of cohort
- ⦿ Dedicated space – common room
- ⦿ A clear 'road-map' of where the course is going

Commerce

- My English is quite good but...
- They speak too quickly
- I'm a bit homesick
- I can't let my parents down



Surviving large classes

- Recorded lectures, with good visuals
- Formal study groups
- Train tutors and study group leaders in support services available
- Weekly meetings of all staff in unit
- Opportunities for conversation – in class and out of class
- Peer mentoring

Law



- ⦿ Can I really do this?
- ⦿ These other students all know each other
- ⦿ Coming to uni is costing more than I planned
- ⦿ So much reading...

What might help?

- Time for introductions in first tutorial
- In-class group work – randomly assign groups
- Week 1: panel of former students (deliberately chosen from diverse backgrounds) with their tips for success
- Online resources developed in collaboration with Academic Skills unit on skills specific to studying law
- Information of these resources and the Academic Skills unit in course outline

- Slide at end of lecture in first weeks listing resources/support available on campus
- Library reference session specifically for this class
- Knowledge of what additional resources may be available for Indigenous students – especially mentoring and tutoring
- Encourage peer learning
- Mentoring from Indigenous lawyer

Engineering

- ⦿ I can fix anything mechanical but...
- ⦿ I was never much good at writing
- ⦿ I need to work 30 hrs at least to support the kids
- ⦿ I want to spend time with them when they're with me, not studying



Managing life/study/work

- Early assessment of communication skills (Introduction to Professional Engineering)
- Time management skills / organisational skills
- Teamwork – develop a peer support network
- Flexibility in assessment deadlines
- Leadership roles –create sense of connection

They all need

Encouragement

Early Feedback

Engagement with discipline content

References

- Student photos on Flickr photos (Creative Commons licence):
- <http://flickr.com/photos/tyson1978/3198339052/>
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- www.wordle.net – for word clouds

With thanks for ideas to

- ⦿ My colleagues in Student Services and other professional roles
- ⦿ My academic colleagues
- ⦿ Members of Sally's ALTC Fellowship
- ⦿ All my students who have told me what helped them

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