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Blurring Staff and Student Identities: the impact of learning partnerships

Kathrine Jensen
ALDinHE Conference, University of Huddersfield
14-16th April 2014
"We see things not as they are but as we are."

Anais Nin
Student training

Developing confidence in:

• their role
• their position as experienced learners
• giving feedback/opening dialogue

“...students have unique perspectives and are experts on the experience of learning in higher education...” (Crawford 2012)
Developing perspectives

“I now know that there is the potential out there for learning to be so much more than it is now. Some lecturers get it but I think more can be done to change the learning experience. But I also realise that students still need to be willing or no changes will make a difference.” (Student consultant)
“I thought it was amazing. We looked at what students wanted from feedback as opposed to what I want them to learn.” (Academic staff member)
Student Teaching and Learning Consultants: A partnership model
Kathrine Jensen, Julia Kendrick, Sunnie Swinburn

Aims:
• To provide meaningful engagement of students in improving teaching and learning experience
• To create opportunities for student and staff to engage in reflection and dialogue around teaching and learning
• To offer objective student feedback to lecturers

Benefits reported by Students
• Confidence in giving feedback
• Ability to communicate effectively
• Seeing teaching methods more clearly

"I have certainly gained more skills and experience in the way I think and give critique. This has helped me in my everyday studies giving me more confidence in my own feedback." (Student consultant H)

Consultation process

Academic staff contacts project coordinator (PC) with request
Project coordinator contacts student consultant (SC) with task
SC contacts academic to set up meeting
SC and academic staff meet to discuss and negotiate task
SC carries out task
SC arranges feedback discussion meeting with lecturer
SC sends feedback on consultation to PC
Academic staff sends feedback on consultation to PC

Benefits reported by Staff
• Feedback gave useful insights
• Feedback offered reassurance about approaches
• 'Impartial' perspective was valuable

"I thought it was amazing. We looked at what students wanted from feedback as opposed to what I want them to learn" (Academic staff member H)

"Working with the student consultants was a real delight; they were professional and polite throughout. They also provided some really useful feedback in a very objective and non-judgemental way; nowhere near as scary as one might first imagine!" (Academic staff member I)

"I now know that there is the potential out there for learning to be so much more than it is now. Some lecturers get it but I think more can be done to change the learning experience. But I also realise that students still need to be willing or no changes will make a difference." (Student consultant)

"I have certainly gained more skills and experience in the way I think and give critique. This has helped me in my everyday studies giving me more confidence in my own feedback." (Student consultant H)
1. Enable staff and students to take up different roles to develop perspectives on teaching and learning
2. Promote conversations about teaching and learning
3. Develop spaces where this can take place