Appreciating Issues from Students’ Perspectives

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Background: What are the issues that students face in their first semester? How do they perceive entrance to university as newcomers to a new discourse and unfamiliar culture? We have videotaped interviews in which students discuss issues that they experienced in their first semester at university. (All QUT ethics requirements have been followed). The roundtable discussion participants will be encouraged to reflect on the journey that first year students take and where we fit in as practitioners motivated to make the transition to tertiary education smoother.

Outline for the Roundtable Discussion:

Introduction: (5 minutes)
- Brief explanation of DVD background
- Sit with two/three other people from different institutions. Introduce name/school/position
- Directions for workshop participants
  - Watch the DVD clip and identify the issues that the students seem to be describing. (We, as presenters have identified issues and edited the video clips accordingly. The participants will label the issues themselves as part of the discussion process).
  - In the follow-up discussion jot notes down on the coloured paper in front of you: i.e. responses, suggestions, solutions, feedback

Part One: Developing Self-Confidence (5 minutes)
- DVD Clip One (1 minute)
- Discussion Questions/Prompts (4 minutes)

Part Two: Making Connections within the University (5 minutes)
- DVD Clip Two (1 minute)
- Discussion Questions/Prompts (4 minutes)

Part Three: Seeking clarification of university jargon/expectations (5 minutes)
- DVD Clip One (1 minute)
- Discussion Questions/Prompts (4 minutes)

Part Four: Coping with power distances (5 minutes)
- DVD Clip One (1 minute)
- Discussion Questions/Prompts (4 minutes)

Part Five: Facilitated Whole Group Discussion (10 minutes)
- Look back at all of the issues raised and in whole group discussion generate possible ideas/reflections/solutions
- Summarise the ideas from each small group on butcher’s paper and gather feedback about them from the whole group.
Scheduling permitting, we could tidy up ideas gathered from this roundtable discussion and present them at a poster session as well.

Presenters Biographies:

**Rena Frohman**, Language and Learning Adviser, QUT International College (QUTIC)
Rena holds a MA in TESOL from SIT in Brattleboro, Vermont. Since 1989, she has taught elementary/literacy to advanced tertiary preparation levels in Asia, North America and Australia. She is currently advising first year students in University Entry Programs which include Foundation, Diploma (undergraduate) and Bridging/Pathway (postgraduate) students at QUTIC.

**Josie Healy**, University Entrance Programs (UEP) Program Educator, QUTIC
Josie completed an M.ED TESOL in 2002 and is a program educator at QUTIC. She teaches Communication in Diploma courses which include the first year of Business, IT and Creative Industries undergraduate degrees at QUT. She also co-ordinates and teaches in the Bridging program which is mostly made up of International postgraduate students. Prior to working with International College, Josie taught first year B.Ed (Primary) students in the Faculty of Education at QUT.

Extra Note
If our roundtable discussion proposal is accepted, we will need a DVD player. This is not listed in the choices of equipment on the conference list.