What turns you on?

An action research approach to identifying first year students’ perspectives on engagement

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Key Contacts

• Nick McGuigan

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Presentation Structure

• Action research model
• Course overview
• Reconnaissance
• Intervention
• Evaluation of Intervention
• Questions
Action Research

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve ... their own educational practice, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988
The Course – Acct 102

• Introductory Accounting and Finance for Business
• Compulsory Bachelor of Commerce Management

• Course aim
  – Decision user appreciation of financial reports
  – Understanding of the basic concepts underpinning the preparation and analysis of accounting reports
  – Application to the interpretation and management of accounting data

• Course is delivered three times per year
Student Composition

- 600 students enroll
- Roughly equal gender split
- Student composition
  - Agriculture and life science
  - Accounting major
  - International
- Generation Y
  - The student cohort currently emerging can be defined as an ... “independent, informal, innovative, assertive, technologically-minded collection of young individuals known as generation Y (Sheahan, 2005).
Reconnaissance

Acct 102 Historical Trends 1996-2005

Year

Percentage


Pass rate
Average mark
Reconnaissance

ACCT 102 Pass Rate by Semester 1996-2005

Percentage

Year


0  20  40  60  80  100

Semester 1
Semester 2
Reconnaissance

ACCT 102 Average Mark by Semester 1996-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Semester 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Semester 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Semester 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Semester 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reconnaissance

Teaching Staff Observations

• “Heterogeneous chaos”
• “Hated it when they did it; wanted a set of notes 5 years later. One of those subjects that students can see little purpose in until they actually have to use it in real life.”
Reconnaissance

This is Boring!

“…hassle the lecture to provide you with more interesting examples so you can find concepts easier to relate to.”

Examples and real life explanations of concepts are every part of this subject hard to understand. “It is tricky for international students… the lecturer provides an outline & asks us to do some study on our own.”

More tutorials – optional ones as well as the once a week ones we have now on our own.
Our Identified Problem

How to Re-engage our students with their first year experience in Acct 102: Accounting and Finance for Business?
Brainstorm
Learning Relevant to our Students

- Student feedback – Relevance and applicability to industry (Gibbs, 1988; Sutherland, 2000)
- Interaction and realism within a student’s life

- Methods
  - http://www.sorted.co.nz
  - Examination scripts
  - Video clips on manufacturing
Learning Relevant to our Students

Quick KiwiSaver calculator

My Calculators
No saved calculators

Sort Me

All Calculators
Goals
My Goals worksheet
Net worth
Goal machine

Budgeting
Budget

Money Personality
Money personality worksheet
Add money personality profile

Saving
Regular saving
Lump sum
Goal machine

Debt
Get into debt

Notes on this calculator
1. This calculator is designed to give you ballpark figures only - in other words, they won't be exact to the last dollar.
2. You don't need to use a dollar sign or a comma when putting in dollar amounts. Example: $10,000 not $10,000.00.
Brainstorm
Intervention

• Interactive Lectures
  – Teaching philosophy – active in nature
  – Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Sutherland, 1997)
  – Students participate in an interactive classroom environment (Biggs, 2003; Ramsden, 2003)

• Industry Perspective Workshops
  – Modeled on industry – decision making
  – Real business practice
Intervention

• StudyTXT
  – Innovation through mobile learning (Mellow, 2005)
  – Download accounting study messages directly to a mobile phone
  – Written by academic staff specifically for course

• Online Consultation Time
  – Lincoln campus located out of CBD
  – Staff support from any location
  – Synchronous recorded chat
Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 02:31 PM --> Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 03:37 PM

14:31: Kirsten Macdonald has just entered this chat

14:32: Kirsten: Hi everyone. Please make sure you hit the "beep" button next to my name so I know you are there asking questions 😊

14:37: Weimeng Sun has just entered this chat

14:38: Weimeng: Which formula will be given in the final exam

14:38: Stephen Peter Blain has just entered this chat

14:41: Stephen Peter: We are examined on the section Jamal taught aren't we?

14:41: Kirsten: Hi Weimeng, please see Nick's notice from this morning. All financial formulae for my section of the course will be provided as shown on the formula sheet on the previous exams.

14:42: Kirsten: Hi Stephen, please also see Nick's notice. The exam will only cover the course material from after the holiday break.

14:43: Stephen Peter: Hi yeah I read that it just sounded very strange, good though

14:43: Kirsten: Pleased you're happy 😊

14:45: Alisha Sonja Brorens has just entered this chat
Intervention

• Discussion Forums
  – Frequently asked questions
  – Social forum
  – Emailed discussion forum messages

• Work Portfolios
  – 4 pieces of work submitted in a portfolio style
  – Each part comprises of 3 weeks worth of lectures
  – Opportunity for students to build on their knowledge
Intelligent Tutoring System
Evaluation of Intervention

Enthusiastic teaching with real-life examples
Loved the interactive way class was conducted
Portfolios and case studies applied what we were learning and we got a better understanding
Constant work doing portfolios helped keep my work ethic up
Lecturers very happy to help me and answer questions. Very efficient marking/returning of assessment with feedback
A combination of many things enhanced my learning in this subject
An excellent course
Far too much content is covered in this subject for the amount of time we have and that it's a 100 level paper
My difficulties with maths and lack of background experience with maths and accounting made it more difficult for me
Portfolios were great but too much work
Make sure that the "big picture" is regularly referred to and how what we are learning fits into it.
Evaluation of Intervention

Acct 102 Historical Trends 1996-2006
Evaluation of Intervention

ACCT 102 Pass Rate by Semester 1996-2006

Year

Percentage


Semester 1
Semester 2
Evaluation of Intervention

ACCT 102 Average Mark by Semester 1996-2006

Percentage

Year


Semester 1
Semester 2
Where to Next

• Repeat initial study collecting data through cycles of student cohorts
  – Semester 1 and 2 2007
  – Summer School 2008
• Focus groups
• Statistical analysis of course feedback
• Refine our Study
  – Support offered in the course