MONASH University

PEER ASSISTED TEACHING SCHEME

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS

BUILDING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION UNITS

PATS GUIDE

2011

Version 3.0

http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/educational-excellence/peerassistedteachingscheme/

AUSTRALIAN LEARNING & TEACHING COUNCIL

Promoting excellence in higher education

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The layout and style of this document are based on materials developed by Anna Rowe, Ian Solomonides and Boris Handal, as part of the leading excellence development program at Macquarie University 2010.

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ISBN 978-0-646-55173-9

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Foreword

The quality of teaching and learning in universities has become a central theme in the Australian government's agenda for the higher education sector (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). Its importance is seen through the establishment of the former Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) which is aimed at improving the student learning experience by supporting quality teaching and practice. This has led to an increase in teaching quality initiatives, measurements and assurance, supported by ALTC awards, fellowships and grants.

Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS) is where two or more colleagues collaborate in helping improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction within identified units. It also aims to build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers. This is achieved by building on the current research that highlights the benefits of peer assisted learning (PAL) programs but applying it to academic teaching staff themselves.

There are two main purposes for PATS:

- To improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction within identified units
- To build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers.

To improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction it is important to address issues that students raised that deemed the unit needing critical attention. The issues are captured both in the quantitative results and the qualitative comments that students have written in the end of semester unit evaluations. By working with a partner to provide interpretative guidance on these results, you start to develop critical reflection skills to analyse comments in a positive light aimed at improving the health of a unit.

PATS is currently embedded in HED5011 (Learning and Teaching in Higher Education), a six point unit part of the **Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (GCHE),** Monash University - which aims to inform and enhance teaching practice. It can also be done informally as an arrangement between two colleagues or of part as the Faculty's formal process to improve student satisfaction with the quality of the units offered. Where it is aimed at formally improving the unit evaluation results, there is a process to follow which is described and illustrated on page 4 of this guide.

Monash University has many outstanding teachers, and this is seen through the university's history of successful ALTC citations, teaching excellence awards and ALTC Grants. This guide was funded from a 2010 ALTC Teaching Fellowship, awarded to a Monash University academic. This ALTC Fellowship takes a first step to assist academics in improving the health of their unit by partnering them with academics in their discipline whose units have been recognised as excellent. To build leadership capacity, the university needs to capture and share methods and approaches used by outstanding teachers.

There are many benefits associated with PATS, the main benefit is to increase one's awareness of their own teaching and gain a better understanding of the students' learning needs.

This booklet will explain what the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme is about and help you through the process.

The guide is the first in a series to be produced as part of the Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), at Monash University.

Introduction

In this guide

We have set out to give you an overview of the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme, and a process to follow with a table of scheduled activities. The main focus is on quality enhancement, yet outcomes and results provided to Heads of Schools/Departments and Deans only give them a measure of quality assurance.

The main results for unit performance are taken from the Unit Evaluation (UE) survey. Academics can receive feedback on their teaching via the MonQueST survey. From 2011, these surveys will be combined into one instrument, the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit (SETU) - described on page 9.

The intention is to examine teaching and learning practice as a semester long process of improvement, that is clearly planned at the start, reflected upon after semester and monitored during the semester with assistance from outstanding academics within your discipline.

What is the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme?

PATS provides a structured framework for ongoing improvement of a unit and learning practice with input, assistance and guidance from faculty teaching leaders.

Why is it worthwhile?

PATS is worthwhile because partnerships within and across disciplines develop, which helps:

- create a supportive environment
- encourage interaction and respond to issues and opportunities that arise
- set time to reflect critically and creatively on practices
- construct understandings together
- communicate reasonable expectations and achievements
- foster enthusiasm and commitment to learning through actions and approaches
- review and plan together for a shared purpose
- share accountability for outcomes
- build confidence and opportunity and guidance to display leadership
- share in planning, learning and assessment activities

Getting started

At the end of each semester, Associate Deans of Education (ADEs) and Heads of School (HoS) and academics will receive unit evaluation results for all units taught in their faculty. The quantitative results are made public while the qualitative student comments are only available to the ADES, HoS and the academics in charge of that unit.

Engagement formally in the scheme will commence through the normal practice of identifying units within faculties that require critical attention or need improvement and those which have performed at the high end of meeting aspirations or outstandingly. To help with the recruitment process there are two template letters below which can be used by Associate Deans of Education and Heads of Schools to recruit participants.

Template letter for Associate Deans of Education to forward to Heads of School

Dear *(HoS's name)*,

Do you have units in your school/department that need critical attention?
Do you want help to develop a strategy plan to improve the health of these units?
Do you require resources to support units for improvement?
Would you be interested in a scheme to help address these issues?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS) is here to help. PATS is where two or more colleagues collaborate in helping improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction within identified units. It also aims to build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers. This is achieved by building on the current research that highlights the benefits of peer assisted learning (PAL) programs but applying it to academic teaching staff themselves. The scheme provides an informal, relaxed environment where academics can discuss and share ideas, come up with strategies and to do some collaborative mutual problem solving.

If you wish to find out more about PATS or are interested in having your academics participate, please speak to your Associate Dean of Education.

Template letter for HoS to forward to academics for the recruitment of participants

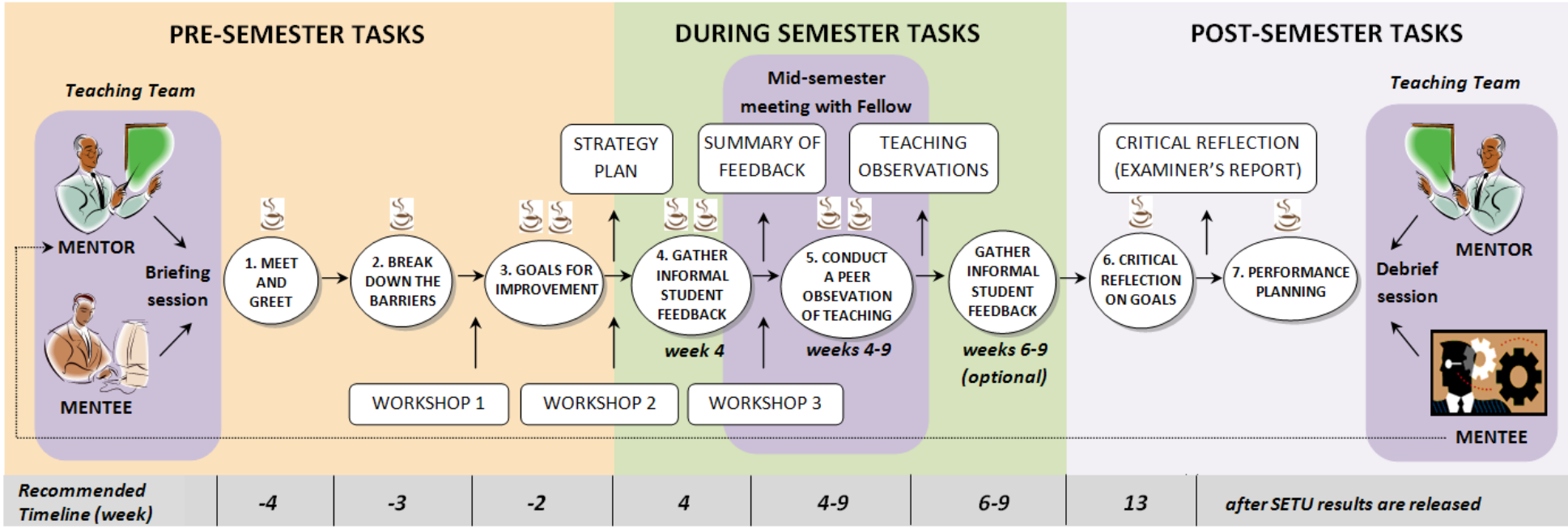
Dear *(academic's name)*,

Do you wish to improve the student satisfaction of your unit?
Do you wish to have more confidence when teaching?
Would you like to be more effective in preparing lecture slides?
Would you like to have someone to bounce ideas with and seek advice from?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS) is here to help. PATS is where two or more colleagues collaborate in helping improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction within identified units. It also aims to build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers. This is achieved by building on the current research that highlights the benefits of peer assisted learning (PAL) programs but applying it to academic teaching staff themselves. The scheme provides an informal, relaxed environment where academics can discuss and share ideas, come up with strategies and to do some collaborative mutual problem solving.

If you wish to find out more about PATS or are interested in participating, please speak to your Head of School or Associate Dean of Education.

The PATS process



BRIEFING

Academics are invited to participant in PATS. If deemed appropriate by the ADEs/HoS, the academic responsible for teaching a unit that requires improvement is partnered with an academic leading a high performing unit to discuss practical ways to improve teaching, course curriculum, and unit development. A briefing session outlining the scheme and its aims is given by the teaching fellow to potential partners prior to semester.

MEETINGS

Partners are expected to reflect on the unit, students' feedback, and examiner's report and review teaching materials. They would openly exchange views and teaching ideas, discuss ways to improve the unit, collect informal student feedback during the semester and organise a peer observation of teaching. It is expected that at least three meetings will take place before the unit is next offered, at least four meetings should occur during semester and two will occur after the semester has concluded.

INCENTIVES

Incentives such as coffee vouchers will be issued to each participant to encourage partners to meet informally pre, during and post-semester. Academics who are able to show improved outcomes by way of an increase of at least 0.5 in unit evaluations will may be rewarded in some way (ie. via an academic performance development scheme, towards promotion or a certificate for teaching improvement).

WORKSHOPS

A series of teaching workshops will be organised by the teaching fellow, in which mentors will share their teaching strategies and methods. In addition academic staff from the OPVCLT will deliver workshops on peer observation of teaching, assessment strategies and curriculum alignment. Ongoing support and monitoring will be provided by the teaching fellow to ensure the successful operation of the partnerships.

DELIVERABLES

As part of the scheme, PATS mentees are expected to produce four deliverables:

1. ***A strategy plan*** – the issues to be addressed and how this can be achieved.
2. ***A summary of feedback*** – which feeds back to the current cohort of students, areas of improvements that can be made.
3. ***A peer observation of teaching*** – in the form of a joint statement between the PATS mentor and mentee which sets out where and when the Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) occurred along with a summary of good practice observed and other issues that need attention.
4. ***Critical reflection*** – a summary reflecting on meeting the goals for improvement.

DEBRIEFING

Takes place at the conclusion of the semester in the form of two separate focus group discussions between the PATS mentees and the PATS mentors with the teaching fellow about the process, their own experiences and ways to improve the scheme for future participants.

PATS Activities

*The PATS activities have all been designed to help academics through the process of improving their unit. The **PATS Participant Instruction Workbook** provides step-by-step instructions with each task carefully chosen for the purpose of guiding academics through their journey of improvement.*

Pre-semester tasks

1. Meet and greet — introduce yourself and meet your partner
2. Break down the barriers — consider the roadblocks preventing improvements to the unit
3. Set goals for improvement — develop a plan of action and specific strategies to achieve these goals

During semester tasks*

1. Engage your students
    - Decide how to gather informal student feedback
    - Gather feedback
    - Discuss feedback with your mentor
    - Conduct a summary of feedback session
2. Engage your peers
    - Decide what to observe
    - Perform a peer observation of teaching
    - Discuss the observation with your partner
    - Produce a joint statement

Post-semester tasks

1. Critically reflect on the semester and your goals for improvement
2. Performance planning — incorporate your improvements into your professional development plan

* Participants can keep a reflective journal throughout the semester. This is completely optional.

Pre-Semester Tasks

To begin the PATS process a map of the road to improvement is planned. There are three pre-semester tasks. Each pre-semester task sharpens the academic's focus and is designed to get them organised and prepared to make changes to their units.

Pre-semester tasks

1. **Meet and greet — introduce yourself and meet your partner**
   Many academics want to change their unit and make it more stimulating, challenging and valued. It is time to be open to change. The first task is for partners to introduce themselves, and get to know each other better.

2. **Break down the barriers — consider the roadblocks preventing improvements to the unit**
   Looks at factors that are holding academics back from making improvements. Academics will need to think about their students, unit content, and curriculum. Academics are great at finding road blocks to explain why their units are under performing.

3. **Set 2-4 goals for improvement and develop a plan of action and specific strategies in order to achieve these goals**
   Unit evaluations are a measure of the quality and student satisfaction of unit and teaching. Qualitative comments provide academics with information they can use to set goals for improvement and strategies to address these areas.

During Semester Tasks

The during semester tasks focus on engaging academics with their students and working with their mentor observing each other's teaching. There are two during semester tasks for academics to complete.

During semester tasks

1. **Engage your students**

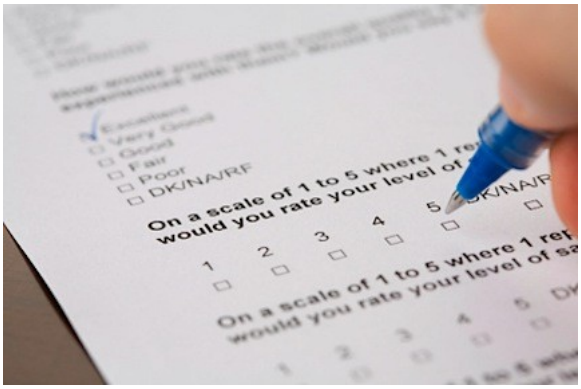
   Academics will be required to collect informal feedback from your students. The collection of feedback can be done via an online survey or handwritten during the class. The informal student feedback process has four steps to follow:

   - Decide how to gather informal student feedback
   - Gather feedback
   - Discuss feedback with your mentor
   - Conduct a summary of feedback session

2. **Engage your peers**

   There are many benefits associated with peer observation of teaching, with the main purpose being to enhance learning and teaching. It can also bring improved quality of student learning, an increased awareness of what material is covered and dissemination of ideas about best practice. The process has four steps to follow:

   - Decide what to observe
   - Perform a peer observation of teaching
   - Discuss observation with your peer
   - Produce a joint statement



Post-Semester Tasks

The post-semester tasks provide an opportunity to reflect on your effort during the semester and to incorporate this hard work into your professional development plan. There are two post-semester tasks for academics to complete.

Post-semester tasks

1. **Critically reflect on the semester and your goals for improvement**

   Over the term of the semester academics participating in PATS will have made a number of changes to their units and their teaching. The unit evaluations currently provide the University with a primary quantitative measure of education quality. However, other qualitative education indicators that align with the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's (ALTC) criteria for teaching excellence can be captured through pre and during semester tasks. The ALTC criteria for teaching excellence are:

   - approaches to the support of learning and teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn;
   - development of curricula, resources and services that reflect a command of the field;
   - approaches to assessment, feedback and learning support that foster independent learning;
   - respect and support for the development of students as individuals; and
   - scholarly activities and service innovations that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching

2. **Performance planning — incorporate your improvements into your professional development plan**

   Critical reflection on the unit and an academic's teaching are key ingredients in professional development. Participation in PATS provides academics with knowledge and experiences to develop as a reflective practitioner, in this case a critically reflective lecturer in higher education.

   One way of capturing both the qualitative and quantitative changes in the performance of academics, in relation to unit and teaching improvement, educational leadership and education standing is via the Performance Development Online (PDO) tool. This tool is available to support academic staff in managing their performance development cycle in a timely and consistent way, and is the final post-semester task of the PATS process.

SETU

Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit

In 2011 Monash University combined the unit evaluation instrument and the MonQueST survey into one instrument, called the SETU (Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit) instrument. The Monash Quality Unit (MQU) - formerly known as the Centre for Higher Education Quality (CHEQ) supports the development of quality assurance and improvement across Monash University.

MQU provides the Unit Evaluation Results and qualitative comments provided by students, along with specific information about an academic's teaching. Each year, every faculty at Monash undertakes to evaluate its units using the Unit Evaluation component of the instrument. The compiled results are reported at: http://opq.monash.edu.au/mqu/index.html

Unit Evaluation component

The Unit Evaluation component of SETU focuses on student perceptions of units. Faculties use this data to improve units and courses. These surveys are extremely important in identifying units that are meeting students' expectations and needs, as well as units that can be improved.

There are two sets of questions; five University Wide (UW) and five Faculty Wide (FW). The **University Wide** questions used in the Unit Evaluation component are:

1. The unit enabled me to achieve its learning objectives
2. I found the unit to be intellectually stimulating
3. The learning resources in this unit supported my studies
4. The feedback I received in this unit was helpful
5. Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this unit

The five Faculty based questions are different for each faculty. To find these questions, speak to your faculty's Associate Dean of Education (ADE).

Responses use a 5 point scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" with 3 representing "Neutral". Options for Not Applicable (6) and Don't Know (7) are also provided to respondents and are not counted in the means for questions.

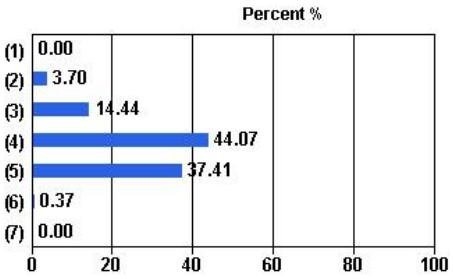
A guide, provided by MQU to interpreting the results is available at: http://www.adm.monash.edu.au/cheq/evaluations/unit-evaluations/index.html

Responses to the University wide questions for all units are publicly accessible; access to the faculty wide questions is restricted to members of the university, including students.

Example of output from SETU - Unit Evaluation

Response Scale	Responses	Percent
(1) Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
(2) Disagree	10	3.70%
(3) Neutral	39	14.44%
(4) Agree	119	44.07%
(5) Strongly agree	101	37.41%
(6) Not applicable	1	0.37%
(7) Don't know	0	0.00%
Total (N)	270	100.00%

Graphical representation of overall statistics



Median: 4.22
Mean: 4.16

Campus based medians

Campus	Median
Caulfield	4.42
Clayton	4.04
South Africa	4.30

Teaching Evaluation Component

The teaching evaluation component of the SETU survey contains specific information about an academic's teaching. Although staff that have been nominated for Teaching Excellence Awards and citations are strongly encouraged to undertake an evaluation of their teaching, all staff should consider having their teaching evaluated regularly. This shows sustained levels of performance, and can often highlight areas for improvement.

There are two types of questions used in the teaching evaluation component, five closed questions and two open-ended questions. These are:

Closed Questions:

1. The teacher was good at explaining things.
2. The teacher inspired me to learn more.
3. The teacher encouraged me to participate.
4. The teacher treated me with respect.
5. Overall, I would rate this person's teaching as...

Open Ended Questions:

1. What were the best things about the teaching in this unit?
2. How might the teaching in this unit be improved?

Responses to the teaching evaluation questions are NOT publicly accessible; only academics themselves are restricted to view their results.

Unit Evaluation Indicators

The benchmark for unit performance at Monash University is a rating of 3.6 or above for the University Wide - Item 5: "Overall I was satisfied with the quality of this unit". Results with at least 10 respondents are considered valid. Units scoring less than 3.0 consecutively over three offerings may be disbanded unless the Associate Dean (Education) makes a case for retaining that unit.

Indicators based on median values

Proposed indicators for Unit Evaluation "overall" UW-Item 5 responses

Colour Code	Interpretation	Unit Measure	Characteristics of unit response distribution	Targets
	Outstanding	"overall" item median ≥ 4.7	A considerable majority of responses are "strongly agree"	5% of units have medians ≥ 4.7
	Meeting aspirations	"overall" item median between 3.6 - 4.69	Responses are generally above "neutral", the great majority are "agree" or "strongly agree"	80% of units fall in this band
	Needing improvement	"overall" item median between 3.01 – 3.59	Responses are generally "neutral" or bimodal with no clear trend	10% of units fall in this band
	Needing critical attention	"overall" item median ≤ 3.0	Responses generally below "neutral", majority "disagree" or "strongly disagree"	5% of units have medians ≤ 3.0

NOTE: Unit evaluations are intended to provide a "snapshot" of students' perceptions of a unit, and are only one indicator of unit performance.

Reporting of Median values

SETU reports on median values not means. The justification to report the median value instead of the mean, is because the mean is not an appropriate measure of central tendency. The median however, is the value that divides a distribution in half. In reporting the median, there is an assumption of an underlying continuous variable. When there is a very large number of measurements, the scale points 1, 2, 3 , 4 and 5 are typically assumed to be point values of aggregations such that, for example, 1000 responses coded "1" represent a set of 1000 responses uniformly distributed between 0.5 and 1.5. The median is then the value that divides the distribution in half. For example, in a distribution with sufficient data points to warrant being plotted as a curve, the median would be the point that divides the area under the curve exactly in half.

(explanation provided by Dr Kristina McCrae, Tuesday 11 Aug 2009)

Engage your students —iSETU

Informal Student Evaluation of Teaching and Unit

The iSETU is designed to assist all teaching staff in eliciting and responding to student feedback within a single teaching period, optimally at week 4 or 5 in a standard semester.

Conducting an Informal Evaluation

Most evaluations tends to assess how the lecturer is performing, for example some lecturers receive student feedback saying things like "Dr X. is the best lecturer I have ever known". Although this is affirming, the main thrust of iSETU focuses on what the lecturer can do to improve the students' learning. It helps the lecturer to create a collaborative learning culture and it improves both the teaching by the lecturer and the learning by the student.

Application

Like many formative evaluation processes, the iSETU is applied very early and then at strategic points throughout the series of lectures. The students' feedback enables the lecturer to assess the students' needs, their levels of understanding and their satisfaction with the learning experience as it unfolds. Although anonymity is optional, the lecturer prefers that students put their name to their feedback. The feedback is processed by the partners (or student representatives) who reflect on how to make best use of the information, so as to build social capital and foster the development of a collaborative learning culture. A template for gathering informal student feedback can be found in Appendix 1.

The lecturer can ask for one or two student volunteers to review the feedback over lunch, and then discuss the feedback with their PATS partner.

Process

The lecturer will need about 15 minutes at the beginning or end of the lecture, usually in weeks 4 or 5 – to ask students questions about any component of the unit (eg: assignment, test, lecture delivery, lecture notes, textbook, etc).

Example questions might include:

- What were the best aspect of the unit?
- What were the worst aspects of the unit?
- Please provide some recommendations on how to improve the unit.

The OPVCLT provides an opportunity to conduct an informal evaluation online via the iSETU instrument. The following questions are recommended:

1. What are the best aspects about the unit?
2. How might the unit be improved?
3. What are the best aspects about the teaching in the unit?
4. How might the teaching in this unit be improved?
5. Would you recommend this unit to other people? Yes/No Why?

Summary of feedback

Feedback to Students

Summary of feedback

The summary of feedback is the heart of the informal student feedback process and is delivered at the start of the next lecture. Key issues highlighted by the feedback are communicated back to the students. The lecturer takes approximately five minutes to create a 'moment of truth' for the student group. The lecturer communicates the feedback in a sincere way and demonstrates his or her commitment to transparency and accountability. When skilfully delivered, the summary of feedback builds trust and respect and opens the whole group up to learning. With successive applications of the informal student feedback (ISF), the students adopt more collaborative behaviours towards each other and the lecturer.

A sample summary of feedback session can be found in Appendix 2.

Engage your peers—POT

Peer Observation of Teaching

Peer observation of teaching (POT) is where two or more colleagues collaborate in observing each other's teaching and then provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. It can provide a number of benefits both to the teacher and the teaching institution.

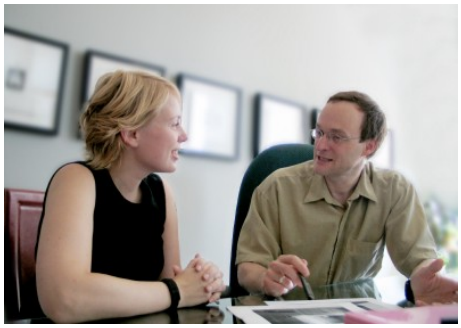
Peer observation works to build supportive teams and can increase an academic's repertoire of teaching strategies. It provides academics with the opportunity to critically reflect on their unit and their practice of teaching.

A peer observation of teaching consists of four stages:

1. ***Briefing session***
   An initial discussion between the partners about the nature and aims of the activity so both can benefit from the experience.
2. ***Observation session***
   Observer records their observations through the session about the various interactions between the teacher and the students.
3. ***Post-observation session***
   A collaborative reflection where the observer provides feedback in the form of constructive criticism and suggestions for improvements.
4. ***Production of a joint statement***
   A short summary containing a log of who was observed by whom, a good practice observed and any other issues related to the promotion of high quality learning and teaching.

Templates to assist in your planning, observing and recording; can be found from:

1. Bell, M (2007). *Peer Observation Partnerships in Higher Education*, HERDSA.
2. Rowe, A. Solomonides, I. Handal, B. (2010**).** *How to Collaborate with Peer Observation: Learning from each othe*r. Macquarie University.
3. Dunseath, T. et al (2010). *Peer Review of Teaching*. Monash University, Sunway.



Case Studies

Note: These case studies are based on the experiences of lecturers who participated in the PATS program at Monash University in the Faculties of Information Technology, Engineering and Science.

Case Study 1 – Engineering

We collaborated on a highly technical second year engineering unit with 150 students where a lot of the concepts were new and involved a lot of mathematical derivations. The main issues identified from the previous unit evaluation were improving communication during lectures and linking the lecture material to the tutorial problems and the real world applications. We spend about an hour each week, usually over coffee at the campus centre (away from emails and the phone), talking about the lectures, how to present derivations, how to use examples as well as how to mark and quickly return 150 assignments to students whilst still giving them some kind of personal feedback. We also did a peer observation of teaching and watched each other's lectures for feedback, ideas and alternative ways to do things.

Each week we would also talk about issues that had come up during the week. A decade ago, these types of queries would have been discussed at morning tea, but these days we have to book time even for a casual conversation. The PATS scheme forced us to make time to be collegial and to mentor and develop new teaching staff.

The student feedback improved even by week 4 of the semester and there was a significant improvement in the unit evaluation feedback. We found the scheme to be positive and helpful, even on weeks where finding an hour to meet was challenging. We would definitely participate again and recommend the program to anyone who wants to develop their teaching, and recapture a little glimpse of the "good old days" of academia when people sat down with a cup of tea and had a chat about teaching and teaching philosophy.

Case Study 2 – IT

The unit we worked on is a core Caulfield third year unit and was first introduced in 2008. It was designed to be a theoretical subject. It incorporates two assignments worth 20% each and an exam worth 60%.

We focused particularly on the assignment work, and clarifying student understanding of what was expected of them in each assignment. As part of this, we addressed the issue of student engagement with the unit, and how we could improve class attendance. We tied key assignment-related deliverables into the weekly lecture and tutorial schedule in a much more deliberate and structured way than had been done in the previous offering. This was designed to ensure that students: 1. had a clear idea of what was expected of the assignment, and were able to clarify any questions or problems early on; 2. needed to regularly attend and engage with the tutorials to complete the various hurdle requirements within the assignment; and 3. did not leave their assignment preparation to the last minute.

The key to success of the PATS scheme was the informality and the trust between both of us. It was a mutually collaborative problem-solving exercise to find solutions to issues that had developed in the previous offering of the unit. Discussion over coffee was a simple but effective means to ensure that the exercise remained a collaboration between colleagues. PATS worked for us because it relied on a collegial approach rather than a formal supervisor-subordinate reporting relationship which can have punitive overtones.

Case Study 3 – Science

The unit chosen for the scheme is a core unit that every Science student must undertake.

Two areas that students identified as needing improvement were the lack of learning resources to support the unit and the feedback students received. Our strategy was therefore to make the students aware of the vast resources available electronically and also on Blackboard. They were also unsure about the unit objectives given in the handbook and the unit guide. Students wish to have the objectives specified in each lecture, so that they were better prepared for the exam. We discussed ways in which the lecturer could highlight the objectives of the lecture at the beginning of each class and provided sample questions on Blackboard. Students were concerned about how the unit would be directly relevant to their future careers and incomes. They had a preference for more practical units. Hopefully when they are older they will be able to reflect on the benefits of the unit. The students also said that they want to learn Critical Thinking Skills, and so there are plans to incorporate this in the future.

Workshop series

Provided are samples of workshops available to the PATS participants.

Interactive Lecturing (3 hours)

This workshop will introduce participants to the concept of 'interactive learning' as it applies to the planning of lectures and presentation that engage audience members via interactivity between themselves and the lecturer/presenter. The workshop is specifically focussed on planning teaching sessions that address the 'lecturalgia' (painful lecture), a condition that, according to McLaughlin and Mandin, "is a frequent cause of morbidity for both teachers and learners".

Facilitator: Dr Geoff White

Planning Your Teaching (3 hours)

This workshop introduces the core components of a teaching plan and the process for developing a plan for your own teaching. The principles learnt in this topic are also applicable more generally to talks and presentations.

The workshop focuses on:

- General principles of planning a teaching session
- Teacher goals
- Writing appropriate behavioural learning objectives
- The teaching plan format
- Setting teacher and learner activities
- Planning for levels of thinking and questions
- Planning effective learning environments

Facilitator: Dr Geoff White

Peer Observation of Teaching (3 hours)

Peer observation of teaching involves academic colleagues in peer review through giving and receiving feedback on teaching practice. Peer observation has the potential to provide valuable insights into teaching practice, and peer observation partnerships offer a structured and collegial peer review process for mutual support within the immediacy of the teaching environment.

The workshop supports potential reviewers and reviewees in developing teaching practice through undertaking all phases of peer observation of teaching through an experiential learning process, and in using the HERDSA guide "Peer Observation Partnerships in Higher Education" (Bell, 2005) as a resource for peer observation.

The presenter aims to share 14 years of experience in developing and presenting peer observation workshops and materials with participants and to facilitate the sharing of participants' experiences and concerns. The workshop will support participants in further developing their understanding of the principles and practices of peer observation of teaching for both development and appraisal purposes, and in refining skills for observing teaching and giving and receiving verbal and written feedback.

Facilitator: Dr Maureen Bell

If you want to KNOW MORE

If you would like to know more, here are some references on the PATS program you may find helpful.

- Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) Monash University
  URL: http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/
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  ALTC Project Manager and Administrative Officer
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- The PATS newsletter is published every two months. It contains all the latest PATS news, research and upcoming events. Every issue is available at: http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/educational-excellence/peerassistedteachingscheme/resources.html

  Below are screenshots from the first issue.

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Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS

Welcome to the first newsletter for the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS). PATS is an Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ALTC) Teaching Fellowship funded program aimed at improving the quality of teaching and student satisfaction within identified units – and build leadership capacity amongst currently recognised outstanding teachers.

This newsletter will be published every two months for the entirety of the program. We welcome your feedback, input and comments at any point along the way.

In this first issue of the newsletter, we wish to outline our program and express our gratitude for the interest and enthusiasm of a number of colleagues from all around Australia who are involved in the program.

The PATS reference group consist of three subgroups. Our external reference group members provide valuable advice and guidance to inform our work. Other reference group members from within Monash will enrich our program with their perspectives. The Monash Peer Assisted Learning Fellows will provide insightful comments and act as critical friends.

Central to the scheme is an independent external evaluator Dr Leigh Wood from Macquarie University. The purpose of the evaluation is to systematically investigate the worth and merit of the program.

In 2010, three ALTC National Teaching Fellowships and nine ALTC local Teaching Fellowships were awarded. To find out more information, visit: http://www.altc.edu.au/fellows

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and we look forward to engaging PATS within your Faculty.

Each month we will introduce the people whose commitment makes this program possible.

ALTC Teaching Fellow:
Dr. Angela Carbone

Angela is the Director of Educational Quality in the Faculty of Information Technology at Monash University. She is responsible for providing senior level leadership to the Faculty's learning and teaching strategic and action plans. With a background in Computing, Mathematics and Education, Angela held the position of senior lecturer at Monash University prior to the commencement of the program.

In her career, Angela has been the recipient of numerous prestigious awards, notably the Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year (1998) and the Australian Award for University Teaching in the category of Computing and Information Services (1998).

ALTC Teaching Fellowship Research & Admin Officer:
Ms. Jessica Wong

Jessica is an exciting new addition not only to the PATS team but also to Monash University. Having been accepted into both ANU and Monash University, Jessica decided to pursue her interest in the area of health and administration through non-conventional methods. With experience working in the US and Australia, Jessica brings a refreshing perspective to the program.

MONASH University

Support for the production of this resource has been provided from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The views expressed in this resource do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd.

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PATS NEWS

Faculties engaging in PATS:

- Faculty of Engineering (Clayton)
- Faculty of Science (Malaysia)
- Faculty of IT (Caulfield)

PATS REFERENCE GROUP:

External Reference Group
Ms Sally Rogan, Ms Katherine Lindsay, Mr Phillip Dawson, Associate Professor Roger Hadgraft and Dr Jane Skalicky

Monash Reference Group
Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington, Professor Peter Stewart, Dr Sheila Vance, Ms Catherine Barratt, Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith, Mr Adrian Devey, Dr Judith Rochecouste and Ms Lisa Smith

Monash Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Fellows
Dr Susan Edwards, Dr Jane Bone, Ms Jill French, Dr Yvonne Hodgson and Dr Gerry Rayner

External Evaluator
Dr Leigh Wood

OTHER NEWS

New ALTC Fellows Orientation

The new 2010 ALTC Fellows had their orientation during the 26-27th July. The two day program covered, managing the fellowship, evaluating the fellow program and media training.

Former fellows (Professors Geoff Crisp, Peter Goodyear and Cynthia Mitchell and Associate Professor Les Kirkup) also shared their Fellowship experiences.

Research in Progress

Prior to the beginning of Semester 2, 2010, participants from the Faculties of Engineering and Science attended a PATS briefing outlining the plan of activities. During the semester the partners will meet informally over a coffee, to the identify key issues surrounding the unit and discuss ways to address these issues. Partners will be supported by their faculties via CALT workshops, resources aimed at improving the health of a unit and other incentives.

Past CALT workshops tailored for the needs of PATS participants included...

- Stimulating Students Intellectually
- The what and how of a peer review
- Aligning assignment work with learning objectives

These workshops will be open to all staff to attend and will take place in the upcoming months.

Another point of reference that has been found to be helpful to PATS is the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) guide: Peer observation partnerships in higher education (2005) written by Maureen Bell.

"Peer observation of teaching is a truly effective process for ongoing change and development in higher education teaching. This guide aims to support higher education teachers through a program of skills, knowledge and ideas development to meet their own developmental aims within their immediate teaching environment."

ACDICT Learning and Teaching Network Forum, July 2010

The ALTC Fellow was invited to present the PATS scheme at a two-day program held by the Australian Council of Deans of ICT (ACDICT) to disseminate new developments, networking and sharing of good practice. Time slots were also devoted for the discussion of hot issues identified by the participants. A key outcome of the forum was the identification of future actions to enable the establishment by ACDICT of a framework to support the strategic development of new collaborative initiatives to enhance ICT teaching and learning outcomes across all Australian Universities.

What's next...

- CALT workshops
- Focus group sessions

CONTACT

If you wish to provide feedback or comment on the PATS program, please feel free to contact:

Jessica Wong
Jessica.Wong@monash.edu

Appendix 1

MONASH University

Informal Student Feedback Form

Name of unit: _____

Student name (optional): _____

Please tick ONLY one box for each statement.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
• I am finding the unit stimulating					
• The resources are supporting my studies					
• So far I am satisfied with the quality of this unit					
• I would recommend this unit to others					

1. What are the best aspects of the unit so far and why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What aspects of the unit so far would you like changed and why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Any further comments?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

AUSTRALIAN LEARNING & TEACHING COUNCIL

Appendix 2

Example of a summary of feedback session

Lecture feedback was sought in this instance, one example is given under each category.

After the last lecture I sat down with some volunteers and reviewed your feedback. Firstly, I am pleased that the class is willing to give this process a fair trial. Your written feedback gave me a chance to know how many of the key ideas you remembered in the session and what you were really thinking.

The information you give me is very valuable and I very much appreciate your contributions. I am going to ask you to do this again in a couples of weeks time.

I'll talk first about what you liked, disliked and then the changes you suggested.

Likes - Student participation

Most students found the student participation part of the session was very useful in that it consolidated some abstract concepts and made the lecture more interesting and enjoyable. For instance *student1* and *student2* said:

- *"Practical examples backing up the theory. This makes it easier to remember because of the variety of ways the information was presented" student1*
- *"Having a lecturer which involves the students encourages us to pay attention rather than tune out and wait for the hour to be over" student2*

Dislikes - Lecture theatre lights and wind noise

An anonymous student mentioned the technical difficulties encountered in the lecture theatre.

- *"Fix the lights! When going from projector to computer mode lights automatically turn on. And the wind noise when you close the door." student3*

I contacted the technical assistant and explained the lighting problem. He told me that Rm 117 has problems with the lighting control, and to monitor the change more closely to pin point when it occurs to see if anything can be done about it.

Changes - Copy of Coded Examples

The first comment I'd like to acknowledge is one by *student5*, who suggested something that might help improve the class's learning and understanding

- *"I would like a copy of the code to help me remember what we did". student5*

Thank-you *student5*, a copy of all my code can be downloaded from LMS please click on the examples link.

Thank-you again for all your comments and this concludes the summary of feedback for week 4.

Commonwealth of Australia. (2003). *Our Universities: backing Australia's future*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government.

Macquarie University, Learning and Teaching Centre. *How to Collaborate with Peer Observation.* Available online at: *http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/pdfs/FBE_peer_obs.pdf*

Bell, M. (2010). *Peer Observation Partnerships in Higher Education*. Milperra, NSW: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA).

University of Ballarat. *Freida's Feedback on Feedback.* Available online at: *http://www.ballarat.edu.au/freidafeedback/*

This guide is the first of a series produced by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) (OPVCLT) at Monash University. This guide reports on the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS) as part of the 2010 Teaching Fellowship program funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC).

Do you want to:

- Get some new ideas to enhance your teaching?
- Improve the quality of your students' learning experiences?
- Identify your own professional development needs?
- Collaborate with colleagues for mutual benefit?

Have you considered using the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme?

The Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme provides a structured approach for improving the quality of teaching and student satisfaction. Through peer collaboration, goals for improvement will be established along with the implementation of strategies. This guide will explain what the Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme is all about and how it can help you through the process.

Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/

Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
http://opvclt.monash.edu.au/educational-excellence/peerassistedteachingscheme/resources.html

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