



CLASSIC PATS: INSTITUTIONAL TRIAL



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- Priority Focus and explanation of PATS variation

The focus was Quality Improvement. A core third year unit in the Faculty of Information Technology was identified by the faculty as 'needing improvement' and selected to participate in PATS. Selection of a unit for a PATS partnership was based on low student evaluation scores from the previous year.

Why

This partnership was part of a trial of PATS for an ALTC Teaching Fellowship that aimed to achieve a consistent university-wide strategy to assist academics in improving units perceived by students as needing critical attention.

People

A peer partnership between a recognised teacher within the Faculty of Information Technology and the lecturer of the unit. The peer partnership was supported by the PATS Coordinator and the faculty's Associate Dean (Education).

Timeframe

Semester 1, 2010

Scope: Unit

A single unit taught within a degree program in the Faculty of Information Technology.

- Key Outcomes

Classic PATS – outputs and outcomes

The unit was first introduced the year prior and was identified to participate in the first phase of an institutional-wide trial of PATS. This was the sixth PATS partnership since its inception.

The focus of the partnership centred on intertwining assignment deliverables into tutorials, so that students needed to attend to fulfil part of their assessment requirements. This was based on previous student feedback on not feeling prepared for assignments and the exam, with an inter-related issue of low student attendance.



System level impacts

Within Monash University, this PATS case aimed to have impact at IMPEL levels 1, 2 and 3. As part of the Monash institutional trial, it aimed for IMPEL level 4. As part of the OLT PATS Senior Fellowship, it contributed to the Fellowship having impact at IMPEL level 5.

1. **Team members:** the peer partnership provided a collegial experience of professional development and support in improving a unit.
2. **Immediate students:** the peer partnership focused on increasing student attendance and engagement by making improvements to the assignments and exam.
3. **Spreading the word:** the partnership and its outcomes was reported as part of an institutional trial helped raise awareness.
4. **Narrow opportunistic adoption:** as part of the trial, the partnership contributed evidence of the success and impact of PATS. Following the trial, the Faculty of Information Technology was the first to implement recognition of the time and support required by PATS and the value to teachers and students alike: the Faculty has endorsed the Scheme by offering coffee vouchers supplied to both mentees and mentors, academic funding of \$500 per mentee and mentor and adjustment of workload to recognise 30 hours commitment to program during the semester.
5. **Narrow systemic adoption:** This partnership contributed to the following changes: implementation of a Faculty policy on providing time and resources to support PATS and PATS being approved at the highest level university education committee at Monash University – the Learning and Teaching Committee – as a strategic unit enhancement program.

- Learning

1. Barriers and opportunities

PATS was a new initiative and initially met with resistance and resentment from the mentee as the teacher was 'strongly encouraged' to participate due to low student evaluation scores. This created a general perception of PATS as a program for poor performing 'bad' teachers with negative connotations of stigmatisation. This perception was overcome once the partnership commenced.

2. What worked well

The commitment to fortnightly meetings, the trust formed through the informality of the PATS process to achieve improvements in student satisfaction scores. The friendly, cooperative climate established over the 'coffee catch up' helped facilitate discussion on a wide range of teaching and learning issues and joint problem solving. This was seen as one of the most positive features of the Scheme. The student satisfaction score went from 2.5 'needing improvement' to 4.3 'meeting aspirations' within a semester as a result of the PATS partnership.

3. What didn't work well

At the time, the Scheme recommended a series of tasks and activities that the partnership could undertake. There was no resource guide that the partners could use on each task. Some suggested activities (such as peer observation of teaching) did not occur as the peer partners didn't know it was a requirement. Had a resource guide been available, richer insights might have been identified leading to much greater improved practice.

4. What was learnt

CASE STORY

The tasks and activities required in the original (classic) PATS program functioned well to create significant change in teaching quality and improved student satisfaction. In addition, it became clear that participating in PATS as a mentor facilitated the development of teaching leadership, as the mentor was recognised with an honorable mention in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award in Postgraduate teaching.

5. National System Impact

- IMPEL Level 2: Changes by team members leading to changes for students who are directly influenced.
- *Contributing to* IMPEL Level 5: Systemic changes at participating institutions leading to changes for all relevant students.

