



CLASSIC PATS: INTERNATIONAL CAMPUS



Case Coordinator Name: Angela Carbone

University: Monash University



- Priority Focus and explanation of PATS variation

The focus was Quality Improvement. A core second year unit in the Faculty of Science (Malaysian campus) was selected based on low student evaluation scores and was identified by the faculty as 'needing improvement'.

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 (from the same faculty). The peer partnership was supported by the PATS Coordinator and the faculty's Associate Dean (Education).

Timeframe

Semester 2, 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 identified to participate in the first phase of an institutional-wide multiple-campus trial of PATS and was the twelfth PATS partnership since its inception. The purpose of the partnership was to improve the quality of a unit and student satisfaction, supported by a highly recognised mentor (ALTC citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, 2008 and Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence, 2007).

Previous student evaluation survey reports identified aspects of the unit needing improvement as: lack of learning resources, nature and extent of feedback given to students and the need to make stronger links between the objectives of the unit and both curriculum content and employability outcomes. Specifically, students wished to have the unit objectives clearly specified

CASE STORY

for each lecture, so they were better prepared for exams and understood the relevance of the curriculum to their future careers.

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 addressed how to best engage students with the resources available as well as making stronger connections between the unit content, assessments and employability.
3. **Spreading the word:** the partnership and its outcomes was reported as part of an institutional trial helped raise awareness within the Faculty of Science.
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

The greatest barrier was managing the process. At the time, the PATS resource guide had not been developed, making it difficult for the PATS coordinator to provide peer partners with direction for their meetings. This partnership was conducted in Malaysia, with the PATS Coordinator based in Melbourne. Meetings were infrequent due to scheduling and time constraints which made it difficult to maintain momentum. Meetings scheduled with the Coordinator were often cancelled or only attended by one of the PATS partners.

2. What worked well

The peer partners gave favorable feedback about the collegiality of the partnership for offering ideas on improving approaches to teaching and increasing engagement with the resources found online. Opportunities to incorporate learning on employability attributes into the curriculum, such as critical thinking skills, were identified by the partnership. The partnership focused on making stronger links with employability and course unit outcomes.

3. What didn't work well

Clear communication, identifying the benefits of participating in PATS, did not occur. The mentee did not enter a peer partnership understanding the potential of PATS for improving their unit or teaching and the benefits of pairing with a highly recognised quality teacher. This negatively impacted their level of participation and may have been reflected in the student evaluation. The results show that the unit has improved in 'intellectual stimulation' (by +0.44) yet



CASE STORY

there was a slight decrease in the students' overall satisfaction with the quality of the unit (from 3.14 'needing improvement' to 2.93 'needing critical attention'). What is less understood are the factors that impacted these results.

4. What was learnt

There were two key learnings from this partnership. Firstly, the need for a local PATS Coordinator to work closely with the peer partners, to manage the process and ensure that the benefits of the tasks are identified and the tasks completed. Secondly, a decrease in student satisfaction is possible and this reinforces the challenges of measuring success of participation in PATS against student satisfaction scores alone.

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.

