

Peer Review: Promoting a quality culture

Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby
&

Associate Professor Mark Brown
Massey University
New Zealand

Contact details: g.t.suddaby@massey.ac.nz

Peer Review at Massey University:

- Context
- Issues
- The initiative
- Peer Review and quality
- Some Principles
- Some Caveats
- Approach to Peer Review
- Participation in Peer Review
- Implications

Context

- Massey University
 - Multi-campus
 - Distance education provider
 - Reviewing learning management system
- Economic factors
 - Economic crisis
 - Budget constraints
 - Capped enrolments
 - Changed funding model
- Changed Approach to Programme Delivery
 - Fifty years of tradition
 - Implementing a ‘blended’ approach
 - Resourcing implications
 - Quality issues

Issues

- Staff expectations
- Student expectations
- Support required
- Lead-in time
- Workload
- Pedagogy
- Collegiality
- Quality

Issues

- Staff expectations
- Student expectations
- Support required
- Lead-in time
- Workload
- Pedagogy
- Collegiality
- **Quality**

The Initiative

The University initiative...

- Replacing WebCT
 - Introducing new Virtual Learning Environment
 - Based on Moodle Platform
 - Business case included 10 action points e.g;
 - Expanded 'e' toolset
 - Course(Re)design for electronic delivery
 - All courses to have an online presence
 - Provide support within Colleges (Faculties)
- And...

Peer Review and Quality

The University initiative...

- Replaced WebCT
- Introduced new Virtual Learning Environment
 - Based on Moodle Platform
- Business case included 10 action points e.g;
 - Expanded 'e' toolset
 - Course(Re)design for electronic delivery
 - All courses to have an online presence
 - Provide support within Colleges (Faculties)

And

- **The Introduction of a Quality Assurance System**

Some Principles associated with quality

- Quality enhancement vs. assurance
- Academic responsibility
- Continuous improvement
- Constructive feedback
- Scholarly tradition
- Scholarship of teaching
- Peer esteem
- ...

Some caveats

- Peer review must be owned and managed by academics
- Individual staff need to have responsibility for key decisions including;
 - who should undertake the review,
 - what type of review is appropriate
 - what should happen after the review.
- Feedback remains confidential to the individual unless they decide to share the outcomes for purposes of;
 - evaluation,
 - performance review,
 - promotion
 - teaching awards.

University policy

- *Peer review must be owned and managed by academic staff as opposed to being centrally driven... It means that individual staff have responsibility for key decisions about peer review, including who should undertake the review and what type of review is appropriate and what should happen after the review (Massey University, 2010).*

Participation in Peer Review

Peer review of teaching;

- Is a key part of the University's wider quality enhancement framework
- Involves academic ownership of the process and outcomes
- Involves continuous enhancement of teaching quality
- Is a professional responsibility of all staff.
- Supports a culture of quality for both reviewer and reviewee
- Can be used as an institutional quality indicator. (Number of 'reviews is collected through the VLE course completion checklist).

The Approach

- Types of Peer Review
- Design and implementation
- Frequency
- The model
- Frequency
- Implications
- An irony
- Finally...
- Some references

Types of Peer Review

Two main types of peer review:

- Formative reviews - focused on gaining information for the purposes of the ongoing improvement of teaching and course design
- Summative reviews - have a particular endpoint in mind and mainly focus on the demonstration of quality in support of processes such as promotion and programme evaluation.

The focus is on formative peer reviews (summative reviews already take place as part of the University's five-yearly programme review cycle).

Three levels of formative peer review:

- *Course Design Review* before a course is taught;
- *Focused Teaching Review* on some aspect of the course during delivery;
- *Comprehensive Review* of all aspects of teaching and course design before, during and after the course is offered.

Design and Implementation

Three levels of formative peer review were defined:

- Course Design Review
- Focused Teaching
- Comprehensive Review

Within these the major domains of the Peer Review Framework are:

- Design for learning
- Resources for learning
- Facilitating learning
- Assessing student learning
- Evaluating learning and teaching
- Professional development



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

Paper Design: Peer Review Report Form

Please complete the questions below to provide your peer review report. There are nine sections following the same format as the *Peer Review Framework for Paper Development* and you are encouraged to provide feedback on each section.

1. Paper Details

Paper number: Paper name:

Semester offering: Year: Mode of delivery:

Location of paper offering: Date of review:

Name of the person requesting the review:

Name of the person(s) providing the review:

2. Design for Learning

2.1 How effective is the paper design? Please provide feedback :

3. Resources for Learning

3.1 How appropriate is the overall blend of learning resources? Please provide feedback.

3.2 What is the status of the online learning environment? Indicate from the list below if the online environment is:

- Sufficient to be made available to students now
- Would benefit from minor modifications before being made available
- Requires major reconsideration or redesign before being made available
- Does not have an online environment

3.3 Do you have any suggestions for enhancing the online learning environment?

4 Facilitating Learning

4.1 How does the paper facilitate learning? Please provide feedback:

5. Assessing Student Learning

5.1 How does the assessment promote learning? Please provide feedback:

6. Evaluating Learning and Teaching

6.1 To what extent has the paper design been informed by student/stakeholder feedback?

7. Professional Development

7.1 What types of professional development might be beneficial to enhancing the paper?

8. Overall Quality

8.1 How would you rate the overall quality of the paper design?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor

8.2 Do you have any feedback about the overall quality of the paper design?

9. Other Comments

9.1 Do you have any other comments to make about the paper?

We encourage you to meet with relevant staff to discuss your report but the findings must not be intentionally revealed without the explicit permission of the intended recipient of the review.

Frequency of Peer Review

- Depends on the type of review but;
 - Every course offering should be reviewed on a three yearly cycle.
 - Should be aligned with the requirements of formal student evaluation of teaching
 - “Light “ course design reviews on a more regular basis as part of Massey’s commitment to quality enhancement.
 - Workload requirements of peer review can be managed if each academic staff member requests and conducts one peer review a year.
 - Evidence suggests the benefits of peer review for both reviewees and reviewers outweigh time devoted to this task.

Implications

- Tension between quality enhancement and quality assurance
- Responsibility devolved to academic staff
- Issues related to ‘feral’ behaviour
- “Top down” decision to introduce Peer Review
- Managing and promoting the process
- Assuring academic staff of confidentiality
- Evaluating the effectiveness
- Sustaining the initiative

An irony

- *One of the ironies of higher education is that while peer review of research is a firmly established and internationally recognised cornerstone of academic scholarship, peer review of teaching — the practice of colleagues providing feedback on one another's teaching — has little or no prominence in university policies and does not feature strongly in academic cultures and practices*

Harris, et. al., 2008, p.3.

Peer Review of Teaching

Access to the peer review website is through:

<http://cadel.massey.ac.nz/>

And then the link on the right hand side to 'peer review'.

The website describes Massey University's approach to scholarly peer review of teaching.

- [Peer Review Guide](#)
- [Peer Review Framework](#)
- [Peer Reviewee Instructions](#)
- [Peer Reviewer Instructions](#)
- [Peer Review Report Forms](#)
- [Peer Review Implementation and Evaluation](#)
- [Further Reading](#)

Finally...

- *Whether faculty become engaged in formative or summative peer review, the underlying goal of the process is to facilitate and champion excellence in teaching.*
- *... As a result, faculty reviewers assume a professional responsibility for the quality of their own and colleagues teaching endeavours, and peer review of teaching becomes a way for collegial exchange and open reflection to take place.*

Carter (2008, p.87)