Summary of participant responses from final session: What is your vision for a successful partnership in assessment and feedback?

The following presents a summary of participant responses to the worksheet from the final session of the Partners in Assessment and Feedback Event on 3rd April 2014, led by Dr Neil Lent. The responses were analysed thematically by identifying major overarching themes (e.g. ‘community’ ‘equality’). Sub themes related to these overarching themes were also generated and are presented as bullet points under each main theme heading.

Some categories are about the nature of partnership and others focus more on what this may mean in the context of assessment and feedback. Each of the major themes represents a single possible way to approach the question posed. These approaches are not intended to be seen as mutually exclusive or definitive but instead may complement or overlap one another. This can be seen across the different questions asked at the conference as well. Although each question was treated separately during the analysis of responses a number of recurring themes including ‘communication’ ‘equality’ and ‘common goal’ can be seen throughout. The tag cloud, which comprises a word frequency search of all the major themes and sub-themes with more common words being larger, further highlights these recurring themes. In presenting the information this way we hope to present a wide range of participant responses and suggestions as well as highlighting common issues and possibilities for further action. As a next step we would welcome your feedback on the findings as well as any ideas or plans you may have to act on this and the other things you heard at the event.

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What does an effective partnership look like?

Community

- Students and staff closer together
- Nurturing
- Community spirit
- Collaboration
- Alignment of interests

Equality

- Both parties listened to and respected
- Genuine shared understanding of own and others' roles
- Equal balance of power
- Acknowledge each other’s expertise

Communication

- Transparency
- Ongoing and frequent
- Dialogic
- Open
- Shared vocabulary and meaning
Active and productive (project management):
- Inclusive
- Committed
- Progressive - positive action
- Productive
- Both groups are satisfied with outcomes
- Fit for purpose
- Shared goals
- Built from ground up

Relationship (like a marriage):
- Valued
- Equal power balance
- Trust
- Engaging
- Fun
- Mutually beneficial
- Understand that development includes ‘mistakes’

Specific examples relating to assessment and feedback
- Reflect on teaching, learning
- Staff encourage discussion and research by student
- Students enthusiastic about working as part of a community
- Staff and students familiar and comfortable with A&F
- Student choice of assessment
- Students active in course and programme assessment design with staff
- Staff assess in a variety of ways
- Student engagement with feedback

What makes it work?

Communication
- Mechanisms for negotiation
- Safe environment
- Listening
- Dialogue between students and staff/PTs
- Open
- Transparency

Shared understanding and respect
- Respect and inclusivity
• Shared goals, values and understanding
• Appreciation of all stakeholders’ contributions
• Compromise
• Trust and honesty
• Students experts at being students; staff expert teachers
• Has boundaries

Commitment to a common goal

• Agreement on common goal and aims
• Mutual benefit
• Meets needs
• Achievable
• Confidence/belief in process
• Visible commitment
• Clear shared vision
• Shared vocabulary

Managing expectations

• Acknowledge barriers
• Be realistic
• Clear expectations
• Fair demands on students

Institutional level change and/or support

• Infrastructure, resources and time
• Agreement on time and effort needed
• Adaptable
• Consistent frameworks that allow for flexibility
• Readiness to experiment/take risks
• Feedback and recognition of input/output
• Social interaction
• Leadership and advice support

Specific examples relating to assessment and feedback

• Commitment to explore possibilities, follow up and maintain engagement
• Encourage peer learning
• Student confident and able to shape A&F
• Adaptive use of assessment
• Shift balance of responsibility to students
• Better representation of students
• Both sides in agreement as to who does what and when
• Commitment to quality feedback from staff
• Serve needs of all students
• Willingness to change
• Consistency
• Meaningful relevant assessment

How do we bring this about?

Institutional level change and/or support

• Buy-in
• Reward good practice
• Time and space to agree purpose and route to goal
• Course level intervention
• Work from both ends - legislation from top; train staff and students
• Make it compulsory
• Investment in teaching rather than research to move profile towards teaching
• Students doing research as part of degree; to reduce staff time on research
• Making time for enhancement
• Not adding to workload
• Interdisciplinary process development

Culture shift

• Challenge perceptions, break away from tradition
• Embrace change, try new things
• Structured gradual change
• Break down barriers
• Freedom
• Make it enjoyable!

Project management

• Ongoing development
• Be realistic about moving forward
• Leadership
• Planning / strategy
• Staff development
• Lay out the journey people need to change their practice
• Getting colleagues on board

Communication

• Trust, transparency and honesty
• Energy
• Dialogue
• Engaging with students
• Being more explicit
• Shared knowledge and understanding

‘Genuine’ partnership

• Discuss vision, how to enact and agree priorities
• Learn how to form partnerships
• Team skills training
• Positive confidence building learning environment
• Bring it into normal process - involve stakeholders
• Create shared values
• Show students they can have an impact
• Facilitate more opportunities for discussion
• Strong relationships
• Use neutral spaces

Specific examples relating to assessment and feedback

• Clear agreed rules up front
• Assessment as peer review
• Ensure student representation including on course team
• Reflection / review
• Informed by evidence
• More coherence across teaching
• Showcasing
• Appropriate timing in the curriculum
• Sessions for students to understand their feedback
• Student responsibility
• Reactive
• Staff engagement in different methods of assessment

Single most important element in supporting the creation of a genuine student-staff partnership

Dialogue

• Open communication
• Honesty
• Compromise

Common goal/vision

• Shared understanding
• Mutually beneficial

Equality

• Radical breakdown of power
• Trust
• Respect
• Inclusive

Engagement/motivation

• Belief
• Willingness to change
• Staff buy-in
• How do you get the 95% who were not here to engage?

Institutional support/change

• Less rigid structure
• Course level intervention
• Achievable action plan
• Staff development
• Staff reward for teaching
• Practicality
• Enough people

Show students they have an impact

• You said, we did

Tag cloud

achievable acknowledge action active adaptable agree agreement aims alignment appreciate assessment balance barriers belief beneficial benefit break buy change clear collaboration commitment common communication compromise confidence consistency course design development dialogue discuss done encourage end engagement environment equal expectations expert expertise feedback forward get goal good groups honesty impact inclusive institutional intervention investment involve learning level listen make managing meet methods move mutual needs ness ongoing open part participants parties people plan power practice process programmes purpose reflection research respect responsibility right

shared space staff students take teaching team time together transparency trust understanding use values vision willingness work