

Concurrent Session L
Wednesday 14 September 2016
1:55pm – 2:45pm



Session 6
Engaging the Student Voice: Boosting Generation Y Students
Participation in the Feedback Cycle
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Since 2007 Stuart Terry has been the Organisational Researcher at Otago Polytechnic. In this role he has responsibility for institutional evaluation, quality systems, measuring staff engagement, increasing participation of the student voice and providing evidence to improve student satisfaction with their learning experience. Stuart has a strong interest in quality and evaluation within the institute of technology and polytechnic sector of tertiary education in New Zealand.

It is now widely recognised that achieving a high response rate to online surveys by students is challenging. This is due to a number of factors including the sheer volume of surveys students are exposed to both within their institution and in the wider world as well as an overall reduction in the use of email. We know that Generation Y students have well-established digital identities before they arrive on campus, and their movement away from the use of email as their main source of communications to other social media platforms is rapidly increasing.

This presentation reports on the strategies implemented at Otago Polytechnic to boost response rates to online surveys. This has been achieved by engaging students with alternatives strategies to email such as the use of “pop up” messaging and opt out functions and redesigning questionnaires based on feedback from students, teachers and administrators. The other key aspect of the strategy was the active engagement of teaching staff in the question design, timing of the survey delivery and creating immediate access to feedback reports.

The findings show that response rates across the institution have increased markedly and have been sustained since the strategies were implemented in 2014. As a result students are seeing that their feedback is listened to and acted upon due to teachers placing more value on the data generated by the higher response rates.

The findings are important as they provide clear evidence that by adapting communication methods and actively involving teaching staff it is possible to increase student engagement online to ensure the Generation Y voice is heard in representative numbers and the feedback loop is closed.