Exploring the elusive shape of service outcomes: Reflections on evaluating academic language and learning support services

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Student Learning *Te Taiako*

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Today's presentation

- Evaluation in Higher Education
- Evaluation in student services contexts
- Student Learning Te Taiako – a case study
- Interactive activity
- Towards developing an evaluation framework
- The next step

Evaluation in Higher Education (HE)

1) HE institutions are under increasing pressure to demonstrate tangible evidence of their performance.

   (Suskie 2006; Lomas 2007;Duque 2013; Franco-Santos, Rivera & Bourne 2014; Chalmers & Hunt 2016; Alach, 2015).

2) Purpose of outcome evaluation can be unclear

   (Harvey & Newton 2004)

3) Outcome evaluation can reflect a "clash of cultures" and is a 'game' leading to "tokenism, reputation management and image control"

   (Chalmers & Hunt (2016: 27)

Evaluation in Higher Education (HE)

4)	Institutions can build quality frameworks, and systematic evaluation can lead to an improvement in education quality and student outcomes or achievement.

(Tucker, Pegden & Yorke 2012)

Evaluation in academic learning advising contexts

1) It is difficult to establish connection between learning advising and academic outcomes

2) Need to build "culture of evaluation" (McCann & Sato, presentation at AALL Symposium 2014)

3) Need to take control of evaluation (Hilsdon, presentation at AALL Symposium 2014)

4) Good evaluation adds to professionalism (Macdonald, 2006)

Student Learning Te Taiako

- One-to-one appointments
- Study skills workshops
- Maths & Stats support
- Workshops for international students
- Postgraduate seminars
- Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS)
- Cross-cultural communication programme
- Conversation class
- Support for Refugee Background students
- Grammar workshops
- Resources
- Orientation programmes
- Faculty requested workshops
- Staff training

An evaluation project at SL

- The original evaluation project

(See Reid & Gao 2015)

        - one-to-one consultations

        - peer observation

        - triangulated with student feedback and self reflections

- Question – how can we evaluate impact?

Reflection

What does evaluation look like in your institution?

Towards developing a framework

- A good framework needs to be based on guiding theory of academic advising practices

- Evaluation needs to use research based criteria

 (Prebble, Hargraves, Leach, Naidoo, Suddaby & Zepke 2005: 53-54)

- Evaluation should start with clear mission statement (Cuseo,n.d.)

- Service objectives should link to wider institutional goals

Towards developing a framework

- Evaluation should be a regular part of best practice

- A comprehensive set of evaluation tools is required
  - multiple methods of data collection
  - views of all stakeholders included
  - voices of students who do not respond to surveys (Tucker, Pegden & Yorke 2012)
  - or who do not use the service

Towards developing a framework

- Evaluation should reflect contribution to both social and academic aspects of student experience
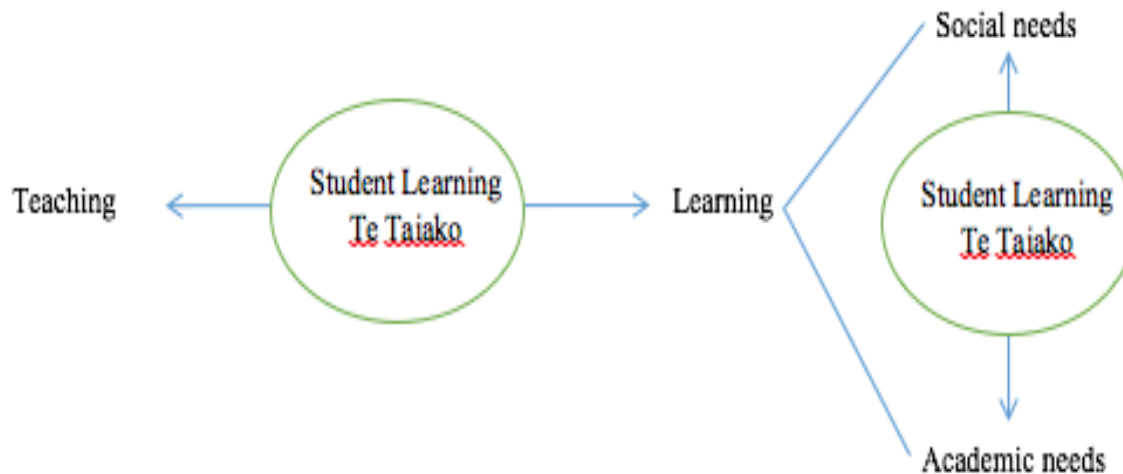
Summary

SL plans to create a framework for future evaluation practice which

- is based on research and theory

- aligns SL objectives to institutional strategies and student experience indicators

- links objectives of individual programmes to SL objectives

- sets clear evaluation guidelines that stipulate frequency of evaluation

- defines tools that collect both quantitative and qualitative data from all stakeholders

- specifies how evaluation results should be distributed.

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