'Optimizing the use of Existing Evidence’

Students Using Students’ Data

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# Engagement Activities

In order to involve students in our data processes, and to encourage ownership over evidence and data sources, it is important that we think about what methods we use to engage them.

## KPIs

If we are setting ourselves targets to measure things like the student experience, then we should be asking the students what to measure, and how to measure it. However, most students do not know what KPIs are or why we need them.

### Increasing Student Engagement with KPIs

* Create a fact sheet about what KPIs are and how we use them
* Get the students to explain KPIs to you through a relatable example (e.g. how could they measure how popular a current reality TV show is with certain audiences)
* Pick an area to focus on for the rest of the session (e.g. student experience), and give them a period of time to come up with ten areas which are the most important – get them to feedback to any other groups
* Ask the student groups to come up with ways to measure each of the areas they identified – get them to feedback to any other groups
* Try to implement some of the KPIs that they generate, and ensure that you feed back to them about how this is being taken forward

## Surveys

Survey fatigue and apathy can be two of the biggest challenges that we face with survey engagement. In order to overcome these issues, we should be trying to increase student buy-in and ownership of our survey processes.

### Increasing Student Engagement with Surveys

* In the run-up to the promotion of particular surveys, consider having information sessions with the Student Reps and engage them in the promotion process
* Ensure that information is circulated on what will have with the data from the survey
* Try to involve Student Reps in all follow-up activity such as action-planning processes
* Ask students for their opinions on the surveys you are using, if they do not think that the survey is ‘worthwhile’, then maybe they can identify improvements to improve the data collected
* You could create a Student Rep survey group, which could look at creating an entirely student-designed survey
* It is worth reviewing any ‘You Said, We Did’ mechanisms at your institution, and getting students to help you shape new ways of closing the feedback loop

## Focus Groups

Focus groups can be a great way to capture student input in different areas.

### Increasing Student Engagement with Focus Groups

* Focus groups are a great way to unpick particular issues with students
* They are really great for carrying out an engagement activity with students (e.g. S.W.O.T analysis) – but maybe we should ask them what issues they would like to focus on
* It is worthwhile giving students as much control as possible over the focus group. To do this we should ask engaged Student Reps to lead the focus groups where possible
* Dialogue sheets can be a great way to make our focus groups fun, and also to structure the conversations in the room so that they focus on the areas they are supposed to
* It is worth considering ways in which we can incentivise attendance so that we get more students coming along and participating (e.g. providing lunch or lunch vouchers if possible)
* If the students come up with suggestions around particular areas, we need to try to implement their ideas. We should also ensure that we involve them in the work going forwards, so that it is truly student owned

# Tips, Tricks & Hacks!

* Provide food or snacks at your activities to fuel brain power and increase attendance
* See if there is a way of recognising the extra effort put in by the students
* Where possible, get students to lead your engagement sessions – this can be more engaging for other students, and can be a great way for students to practice their presentation skills
* Make your presentations accessible – terminology can be a barrier to engagement. Also, it’s a great idea to try and make your content relatable. Think about how you could relate concepts such as engagement, enhancement, or KPIs to everyday life or popular culture
* After focus groups or engagement activities, try to develop action points. All too often ideas can get lost, or forgotten about. If we create action points then this is less likely to happen, and it can show the students that the work being done is meaningful (but don’t forget to make sure you are feeding back on actions that are taken!)
* Try to give the students some actions. This means they are taking more ownership over the work, and feel more involved in what is going on
* Dialogue sheets are a great tool for capturing information, and for keeping discussions focussed on the topic at hand. We can also make these more engaging by looking at how they can be more interactive and fun (e.g. could there be a doodle box? Could students help design your dialogue sheets? Think about colour, layout and terminology)
* Everything should be fun! Are there ways that you could make your sessions hands on and interactive? (e.g. using sweeties as a measurement tool, incorporate arts and crafts)
* Think outside the box, and consider throwing away the rulebook (where possible…) – we don’t need to do things the same way, and we should try to be more innovative in terms of student engagement. For instance, consider getting the students to help you develop activities
* Students can develop campaigns around the data collected, and it’s great experience for them to lead on student issues. Maybe hold mind-mapping sessions to see where they can identify campaign ideas from the data they have collected
* We need to train students on data processes, but they can also train us on the best ways to engage other students - a fun idea can be to do a ‘flipped classroom’
* Make sure you get feedback from the students on how your activities/sessions have gone, but maybe look at different ways of collecting their thoughts – feedback sheets are great, but often don’t capture everything. Try have paper/wipe clean tablecloths that they can use throughout the session as opposed to at the end (you could get colourful white board markers, or set challenges for most artistic feedback)

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