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'Balancing the seesaw' presentation 29th November 2019

Balancing the seesaw

The ups and downs of delivering vocational training programmes



Developing training programmes in partnership with industry is a rich and rewarding endeavour

- Closer connection with industry partners
- Access to case study and other teaching material
- Professional development opportunities for academic staff
- Potential for research partnerships
- Additional income stream

Context

- Partnership between Unitec and Hawkins
- Vocational training programme developed at 3 levels
 - Project delivery staff – Project Excellence programme
 - Cadets- years 1 and 2
- Have completed 4 years of shared delivery
- Developed into NZQA accredited programme

Programme framework

- 5 or 6 modules per year in each of the 2 programmes
- Each module - 2 days in the collaborative working spaces
- Work-based learning
- Assessment event for each module
 - Group component
 - Individual component
- Final capstone presentations

Challenge: Learner diversity - cadets

- Educational backgrounds
 - Trades-based training
 - Concurrently enrolled in diploma/degree programmes
 - Completed degree or diploma (Construction Management, Building Science, Architecture, Engineering, Business)
- Experience
 - New to the company/industry
 - 1-2 years, employed as cadet
 - Several years in the company but new to cadetship
 - Employed as site managers or SMgr assistants or QS cadets

Challenge: Learner diversity - managers

- Industry experience
 - Recently completed cadetship
 - Several years in the role
 - Decades of experience
- Company experience
 - New to company
 - Well-established in company
 - Employed by sub-contractor or consultant

Balance: Peer learning

- Focus on group work
- Discussion situated in projects and practice
- Sharing of knowledge and experience
- Emphasis on collaboration and communication
- Delivery staff (Unitec and Hawkins) are facilitators not lecturers

Challenge: Organisational commitment

- Programmes began at Unitec by winning the contract(s) with Hawkins
- Resourcing requirements were basically unplanned before winning the contract(s)
 - Workload requirements of facilitators
 - Development time
 - Support staff
- Disconnect between provider's business development and academic development initially when programme began

Balance: Maintaining relationships

- Working closely with industry partners
- Strong support from Hawkins leadership team
- Co-developed course outlines and content
- Input from domain-knowledge experts

Challenge: Academic vs industry expectations

- Assessment submissions an ongoing struggle
 - Participants have multiple responsibilities
 - Industry has tight deadlines
 - Assessments are low priority
- Changes in industry needs
 - Feedback provided on content and delivery and the deliverers
 - Original modules need to match industry requirements

Balance: Openness and responsiveness

- Try to accommodate changes as much as possible
- Lead times in academia systems set ups are needed a lot earlier than actual delivery of courses /modules
- Changes require detailed processing through academic and administrative systems
- Facilitators often lack realistic workload capacity

Challenge: Administrative requirements

- Timetabling and course planning
- Enrolments
- Access to resources – library, Moodle
- Reporting attendance and results
- Course completions and certification
- Knowing which participants will be enrolling reasonably well ahead of delivery of modules and then actually getting them to enrol

Balance: Frameworks and flexibility

- Establish QA processes and documents
- Set up generic module frameworks
- Work closely with administrative team
- Work closely with and keep industry partner in the academic loops

Good news stories and anecdotes

Gleaned from participants' comments at their capstone presentations in late October 2019

- “its been great to work with other Hawkins people in other, on a range of projects and from other parts of NZ”.
- “I have learned a lot from the lecturers/facilitators – especially about Lean, BIM, planning and teams’ relationship building”.
- “The mix of Hawkins and Unitec deliverers on each module/course has been great”.
- “I started the Cadet programme this year as a chippy with no real academic/IT skills and now look !! 😊”



Conclusions

- Accept that challenges will occur
- Focus on benefits and positive outcomes for all parties
- Strong reliance on goodwill and generosity of spirit from all parties