



The Student Voice Project

If you haven't been heard, then you probably haven't said anything.

ITP Summit
28 April 2014



Research

- Conducted Sept-Nov 2012 by Anne Alkema, Heather McDonald and Rose Ryan
- Supported by a Steering Group:
 - Ako Aotearoa and NZUSA
 - TEC
 - NZQA
 - NZUAAU
 - VUW



Methodology

- Literature scan
- Development of draft criteria
 - Formal rep systems
 - Resourcing
 - Culture of representation
 - Student actions
 - Results of representation
- Nine practice studies
- Report



Practice examples

Place	Examples
OP	Class Reps in nursing School; Sub-committee to Council
MM	Student Rep System
UoA	TLQC Committee; PGSA
VUW	Class Reps; Student Forum
EIT	Cross campus reps
Unitec	Student Voice Project
NMIT	NMIT Council; Programme reps
Wānanga	Community voice
BEST	Class leaders; Student advocates (staff)



Overview Comment

- Continuum of practice – from well developed to very little happening
- Recent legislative changes have led to evolving systems and trialling “new things”
- Practices are place, context and student specific



High level findings

- Impact of legislative changes
- Evolving / new systems
- Class rep systems the most common
- Need for support/resourcing
- Challenging to get students engaged
- Students as customers / partners
- Over use of surveys
- Feedback loop not well used
- Use of social media
- Wider interpretation for Māori and Pasifika



Class reps

- Excellent examples of practice
 - Difficult for students to collect information / represent student views
 - Requires input and support from the organisation
 - *Representative systems that work have highly visible class representatives ... Students can interact with the class rep daily and what they think about an issue is heard and is visible.*

(Students' Assn, university)



Higher level representation

- Challenging for students at higher levels of representation especially in ITPs
 - Single voice in room of academics
 - Lack knowledge of formal meeting procedures
 - Lack of familiarity with subject matter
 - Students often learning as they go
 - Depends on qualities of the students and support they get



Higher representation (cont)

- *With students there is a power dynamic which is fierce - they are green. It is tough work. Either students say nothing or [say] something random and silly.*

Students' Assn, ITP

- *The Council is such a high level meeting ... [they] are all suited old men. But how much do they know about students ... it seems a huge distance to students.*

Student Rep, ITP



Student interest

- **Varies between institutions**
 - Types of students (younger / older; full time / part time)
 - Size of student body / classes
 - Family / work commitments
 - Positive relationships with tutors / lecturers
 - Feelings that things won't change
 - Apathy
 - Anomie
 - Power dynamics
 - Generally related to environment / services



Over use of surveys

- If it moves – survey it!
- Rationale (QA or QE?)
- Lack of triangulation (done in one ITP and starting at one of the universities)
- Lack of feedback to students
- Lack of input from students in questions and analysis
- Some good examples of student-led surveys at two universities
- Are these voice *of* or voice *for*?



Feedback loop

- Varied – needs more attention so students aware of changes being made
 - Survey results - high level findings put online (in some places)
 - Not triangulated
 - Class evaluations – students generally advised of changes made



Customer / partner

- Most commonly viewed as customers – paying for a service (in keeping with the literature)
- Notion of partnership in learning present in all organisations – stronger in some than others. Seen as an ideal to work towards
 - Is there a tension between the two concepts?



Partnership

It's a mix of both. It's a partnership in that there is a strong student voice, something that we really want to develop. [It's] part of a sense of building a community and that we are all part of the community and to be able to allow this to flourish ... we need to be working in the same place to the same visions. On the other hand, we have to provide a good level of service [and we are] building a customer ethos throughout the university of providing a service. So it's the two things – if we want a safe and dynamic environment, it needs to be done in partnership with students.

(Staff, university)



Māori and Pasifika

- Broader concept of representation
- Concept of family and community representation
 - Have limited evidence as only two organisations



The five principles

- organisations have a range of representative systems that enable all students to have a voice
- students are resourced so that they are able to undertake representative work in a supported, meaningful and knowledgeable way
- students actively engage in student representative systems
- quality enhancements incorporate the student voice
- the organisation exhibits a culture of representation that values the student voice.

