

Creating e-Teaching Team Culture

Situation

Covid-19 has forced many academics to build online community in the education space. Large classes are now more than ever under pressure to deliver quality education. School of Banking & Finance (SBF) have had amongst the largest student enrolments within the Business Faculty.

- Convening large classes within the School of Banking and Finance, Faculty of Business (SBF)– considering 'greater; to be more than 100 students to 1000+, however also with large numbers of teaching staff at different levels. For example, numerous tutors (10+); more than one lecturer, as well as PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) leaders and current students.
- With students not attending face to face lectures even from before 2020 – the role of tutors and PASS leaders have become more important;
- Teaching team consists of Lecturers in charge (LIC's), lecturers, tutors and PASS leaders;
- Physical space allocated for 2 hours of lectures which are typically repeated up to 3 times for large enrolment classes; Tutorials – are 1.5 hours per week;
- As Course Convenor, difficulty monitoring quality of delivery across a large student cohort and with a large and diverse teaching team; How to build quality online community for large classes to promote better e-learning experiences? How to create an 'E-teaching team spirit'? How to implement an ongoing performance management E-tool for your teaching team to deliver quality teaching? Does better coordination lead to better delivery?
- When I was the Director of Coursework for SBF (2018-2019), I initiated and implemented ways to build E-teaching team culture to give quality teaching to students in large classes for reasons outlined below. Then, I didn't know that building e-teaching team culture would become critical for Covid-19 era where both the teaching team and students would teach & study remotely.

Task

- Organising large teaching team (lecturers, tutors and PASS leaders) to effectively communicate with students and meet their demands
- How to communicate effectively with large numbers of students?
- Use the existing LMS - Moodle
- Determine 'quality' communication between teaching team and students
- Who answers student questions on the LMS?
- How to incorporate tutor engagement with students online and remuneration under current duties to undertake; and
- How do we 'quality control' sessional staff when there are so many of them?

Action

In consultation and with the support of the Digital Learning and Education Quality Teams, utilising the existing LMS and resources, a two - pronged strategy was devised:

1. Designate a space on Moodle- Moodle Discussion Forum - where students can interact with teaching body and engage, asking questions which are answered in a timely manner
2. Facilitate coordination amongst the teaching team through, for example, MS Teams

Communication between teaching team and students was through mandatory Moodle Discussion Forum for classes that had a "teaching team" – a central location. Isolated email communication with students about course work has been discouraged and eliminated.

- Teaching team provides timely responses to students about course queries and comment within the Moodle Discussion Forum
- Work in progress - building a culture of collaboration (vs silo operating mentality) amongst teaching body, e.g. tutors switching from representing themselves to being ambassadors of the SBF belonging to a leading educational institution

Challenges

- Ensuring equitable workload amongst team members. Potential hurdle of remuneration of tutors was overcome through efficiencies in time gained as a result of the implementation and through agreed rostering of staff to field questions on Discussion Forum
- Initial extra resources required for review of Discussion Board
- Educating students to write in a public domain- learning process for all

Preliminary Results

Benefits of bringing all teaching team and students to one e-location:

1. Quality Control for all teaching team
 - Transparency encourages quality response from teaching team. Everyone can assess and value what is written
 - Feedback mechanism - A metric which can be assessed: a way to assess student engagement or tutor performance
 - An audit trail, we know how quickly students are being responded to;
 - A metric of student engagement;
2. Time Efficiency
 - All student questions – except personal – are directed to the DB; saves time; removes pressure on teaching team
 - An expected outcome is that these strategies also save time for students
3. Active Education
 - Engages with students outside, shows care, students can themselves answer other questions (which are then reviewed); a way of encouraging participation and mechanism or awarding contribution marks
 - A way of giving timely feedback on student's learning especially on common discussion threads
4. Addresses criteria for SES & Quality Indicator for learning and Teaching Survey
5. Valuable Learning Platform -
 - As students have stepped away from face to face learning, we can look at learning management system data from students. On average as student discussion activity increases, their performance increases
 - Discussion Board becomes a location for E-consultation platform; Easier to pivot to 100% online in 2020
 - Director of Course Work is examining data related to the participation rate of tutors on the Moodle Discussion Forum across designated time frames; monitoring who is responding to what students are asking, and when on the Forum. This is part of a quality control measure, for both of sessional staff participation and curriculum coverage/ quality assurance.

Future Challenge

- Examining data analytics behind student participation to see whether there is a correlation between performance and participation on Moodle Discussion Forum and consistency of results across terms.

References

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Further Information

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