PATS Initial Briefing

Agenda
1. Welcome & Introduction
2. Explanation of Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme
   - mentor/mentee partnership
   - reciprocal partnership
3. Outcomes from pilot project in Faculty of Information Technology
4. Plan of activities and outcomes (PATS Guide, PATS participant instructional workbook)
5. Issue of coffee vouchers
6. Ethics and Data collection (journal, focus group and survey)
7. Time Commitment
   a. Three meetings with the fellow (initial, mid-way, final) (1 hour each)
   b. Ten meetings (1-2 hours each) with your partner
   c. 2-3 learning/teaching seminars/workshops (1.5-2 hours each)
   d. Weekly journal entry (optional)
   e. Focus group interview (1.5 hours)
   f. Survey (20 mins)
8. Website
9. Rewards and acknowledgment
10. Any questions

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Project Title
Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS)

Abstract
This program contributes to the national discourse on standards in learning and teaching, in particular, the development of teaching excellence. It does so by building upon, adapting and extending the considerable body of research on peer assisted learning among students in a peer assisted teaching scheme. This discipline based scheme, first trialled in the Faculty of Information Technology at Monash University, delivered clear improvements in student satisfaction reports. This program will explore the ways in which the scheme might be extended to all faculties in Monash, and how the building of peer assistance capacity in faculties might provide a sustainable approach to teaching development that complements central programs. The flow on effects of this scheme will strengthen quality assurance commitments in universities, as needed by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to protect the overall quality of the Australian higher education system.

Biography

Associate Professor Angela Carbone has recently been appointed the Associate Director, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), at Monash University. Prior to this move she was the Director of Education Quality, in the Faculty of Information Technology, at Monash University, where she was responsible for providing senior level leadership of the Faculty’s learning and teaching strategic and action plans.

Angela was trained in the fields of Computing, Mathematics and Education at Monash University before taking up the role as a lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at Monash. A passionate teacher of computing, she has worked to improve the design of learning activities and incorporated new directions and technologies into the curriculum. She is a co-founding member of the Australasian Chapter of the ACM Special Interest Group in Computer Science Education, with her research activity integrally linked to her teaching and reflective practice. She has received three externally funded projects of national significance in the field of Computing Education and Higher Education, leading to a number of invitations including keynote addresses, occasional addresses and presentations, including three prize winning papers. She is the Program Co-chair of the Australian Computing Education conference for 2012, an executive member of the ACDICT Learning and Teaching Academy and a member of the HERDSA.

Angela was the recipient of the Prime Minister’s Award for University Teacher of the Year (1998) and the Australian Award for University Teaching in the category of Computing and Information Services (1998). By 2000, Angela was a finalist, of the Awards for Outstanding Women in Non-Traditional Areas of Work or Study. Not resting on her laurels, Dr Carbone moved onto more innovative and nationally significant teaching and learning projects. Both projects received a Special Commendation by the Monash Vice-Chancellor for Excellence in Team-based Educational Development, in 2002 and 2008. Most recently, in 2010 she was awarded an ALTC Teaching Fellowship to introduce a scheme to improve the quality of teaching and student satisfaction within identified units and to build leadership capacity amongst teachers, and an ALTC Citation for leading a team to reinvigorate a first year multi-campus core programming unit.
Outcomes from Faculty of Information Technology

The Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS) was piloted in semester 1, 2009. Four pairs participated in the scheme; uptake was mainly from Caulfield academics, with only two academics from Clayton. Unit evaluation results (overall unit satisfaction UW-Item 5) for participants in PATS in Semester 1, 2009 showed that all units improved their ratings by 0.5.

**Unit 1/2009**
Semester 2, 2008 (CL): Median: 2.86, Mean: 2.76 (59 students enrolled, 25 responses)
Semester 1, 2009 (CA): Median: 4.33, Mean: 4.19 (20 students enrolled, 16 responses)

**Unit 2/2009**
Semester 1, 2008 (CL): Median: 2.11, Mean: 2.32 (38 students enrolled, 20 responses)
Semester 1, 2009 (CL): Median: 3.50, Mean: 3.00 (30 students enrolled, 12 responses)

**Unit 3/2009**
Semester 1, 2008 (CL): Median: 2.95, Mean 2.70 (57 students enrolled, 23 responses)
Semester 1, 2009 (CA): Median: 3.56, Mean: 3.32 (49 students enrolled, 25 responses)

**Unit 4/2009**
Semester 1, 2009 (new unit): Median: 4.36, Mean: 4.31 (25 students enrolled, 16 responses)

**Highlights:**
All units demonstrated an increase in overall satisfaction with the quality of the unit

- Unit 1/2009 is now meeting aspirations
- Unit 2/2009 is out of the critical attention zone but still needs improvement
- Unit 3/2009 is out of the critical attention zone but still needs improvement
- Unit 4/2009 (new unit) is meeting aspirations

**Learning and Teaching Workshops**

*Workshop 1: TBC*

*Workshop 2: TBC*

*Workshop 3: TBC*
Appendix 1 Informal feedback

A way of gathering Informal feedback

The lecturer will need about 15 minutes at the end of the lecture – to ask students three questions about any component of the unit (eg: assignment, test, lecture delivery, lecture notes, textbook, etc)

1. What were the best aspects of the unit?
2. What were the worst aspects of the unit?
3. Please provide some recommendations on how to improve the unit.

Lecturer can ask for one or two volunteers to review the feedback... over lunch.

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Backchat Week3 (Unit/Date - 1993)

Lecture feedback was sought in this instance

After the last lecture I sat down with some volunteers and reviewed your feedback. Firstly, I am pleased that the class is willing to give this process a fair trial. Your written feedback gave me a chance to know how many of the key ideas you remembered in the session and what you were really thinking.

The information you give me is very valuable and I very much appreciate your contributions. I am going to ask you to do this again in a couple of weeks time.

I'll talk first about what you liked, disliked then the changes you suggested.

Likes

Student participation
Most students found the student participation part of the session was very useful in that it consolidated some abstract concepts and made the lecture more interesting and enjoyable. For instance name1 and name2 said it helped.

- "Practical examples backing up the theory. This makes it easier to remember because of the variety of ways the information was presented" name1
- "Having a lecturer which involves the students encourages us to pay attention rather than tune out and wait for the hour to be over" name2

Time to predict, observe and explain
Another anonymous student said it helped.
- ... how we are given time to write answers and then explaining the answers we have gotten, even if we understand metaphors for how the program code works"

The opportunity to predict the code, observe what it does and then explain the result aided in their understanding.

Etc...

Dislikes

Lecture theatre lights and Wind noise
An anonymous write mentioned the technical difficulties encountered both theatres.
- Fix the lights! When going from projector to computer mode lights automatically turn on. And the wind noise when you close the door.

I contacted the technical assistant and explained the lighting problem. He told me that Rm 117 has problems with the lighting control, and to monitor the change more closely to pin point when it occurs to see if anything can be done about it.
The ghost of lecture room 195, is well known. The (Building officer) is trying to overcome this problem while the building is still under warrantee. In the meantime the only other room available at the time is Rm197 (next door) with the same ghost.

Etc....

**Changes**

**Copy of Coded Examples**
The first comment I'd like to acknowledge is one by name5, who suggested something that might help improve the class's learning and understanding

- "I would like a copy of the code to help me remember what we did".

Thank-you name5 a copy of all my code can be downloaded of the Web please click on the examples link on the Web site.

**Learning to program**
I would like to thank name6 and name7 for their courage in expressing the sentiments of perhaps many other students

- I would have changed the way we seem to go about writing the code. For it to really sink in we need to have it drilled in so we don't forget" name6
- "More emphasis on the technical aspect of actually writing code rather than making the form. I still don't know how to write the code for what we have done" name7

What makes programming extremely difficult to learn is that the subject material is very cumulative, unlike any other disciple. For example, in Maths you may have discrete topics such as algebra, trigonometry, matrices, complex number, where each topic is independent of each other. Unfortunately programming is very different. The concepts introduced at the start are the foundations you need in order to build an understanding for the later concepts.

I want to take the time needed to ensure that you understand the fundamentals, this will take time. Learning to program is not easy but I will endeavour to revisit what we do so that the technical aspects start to sink in.

**More examples**
Each student is individual, and each student has their own preferred learning style. This is very clear from the comments made by name8 and name9

- I would add more examples of different calculations, but it quite impossible due to the time frame of the session
- Some examples of how VB can be used in more useful larger applications, to see where we are heading

Both are good suggestions and as the subject progresses I will add in more examples which hopefully will begin to help each of you see where we are heading with VB and how useful it is to build larger applications, and what sort of application VB can be used for.

**Pace**
Finally I would like to thank another anonymous student for his courage in expressing the sentiments of many other students,

- Because it is the first time I am learning programming, if you can teach it slower it may be better

Thank-you again for all your comments that concludes the backchat for week X. Thank-you.
Appendix 2

Peer Observation Partnerships

HERDSA Guide available

- Gippsland Library
- Call Number: 371.102 B434P 2005
- Number of Items: 1

Abstract: "Peer observation partnerships are a truly effective process for ongoing change and development in higher education teaching. This guide aims to support higher education teachers through a program of skills, knowledge and ideas development to meet their own developmental aims within their immediate teaching environment. The guide explains how peer observation partnerships work, explores theoretical frameworks and related concepts and provides a guide to the whole process including observation techniques, post observation discussion, feedback and critical reflection."
-- Publisher’s website.

Other details: Includes bibliographical references.

Table of contents:

1. Introduction
2. What is a peer observation partnership?
3. Theoretical frameworks and related concepts
4. Peer observation partnerships: an overview of the process
5. Post-observation discussions
6. Critical reflection
7. Guided peer observation partnerships
8. Conclusion
9. References
10. Appendices