Re-engaging with graduate attributes through curriculum renewal

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Achieving graduate attributes

Meaningful curriculum renewal has proved elusive and there remains a 'national gap' between the rhetoric of graduate attributes and the reality of the student learning experience.

Why?
Three insights about the complexity of

1. Outcomes

2. Engaging Staff

3. Engaging Learners

1. Complex Outcomes

Graduate attributes are an orientating statement of education outcomes used to inform curriculum design and learning experiences at a university.

They are multilayered & multifaceted outcomes that require a combination of different teaching and learning strategies to achieve and require teachers and learners to engage with them in an intellectual way.
Multilayered…

Implicit dispositions attitudes & values, they grow from, but transcend the discipline

Explicit ways of doing and thinking, using and applying discipline knowledge… they are the discipline

Generic skills – off-the shelf, non-specialised foundation skills for university learning and work

*We need to talk about GA as heterogeneous outcomes in an integrated way*
Varied development strategies

Multilayered teaching & learning strategies

• Foundation skills - co curriculum

• Discipline learning - curriculum

• A learning community - extra curriculum

Curriculum Renewal: Alignment and charting a pathway through formal and informal learning
Meaningful engagement

How might we engage the broader university community in thinking and talking about these complex outcomes and complex development processes.... in a more complex way.

Why is meaningful engagement in curriculum renewal so hard to achieve?
How do our university systems help us to meaningfully engage in fostering graduate attributes?
A way of thinking about graduate attributes curriculum renewal in (institutional) context

1. Conceptualisation
2. Stakeholders
3. Implementation
4. Curriculum
5. Assessment
6. Staff Development
7. Quality Assurance
8. Student Centred

Curriculum

Curriculum structure & organisation limits what can be achieved

Linear sequence of content blocks – add in some other ‘blocks’ (PD theme, skills courses, WIL, internships)

Need a whole degree approach

*Change and diversify the existing learning experiences*

Not the same as stating learning outcomes or mapping assessment criteria
Change and diversify the existing learning experiences

‘Curriculum’ as the lived experience of students learning across the whole degree

The UTS model

An integrated exposure to professional practice through dynamic and multifaceted modes of *practice-oriented education*

Professional practice situated in a global workplace, with international mobility and *international and cultural engagement* as centre piece

Learning which is *research inspired and integrated*, providing academic rigour with cutting edge technology to equip graduates for life-long learning
Change and diversify the existing learning experiences

High impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008)

First-Year Seminars and Experiences
Common Intellectual Experiences
Learning Communities
Writing-Intensive Courses
Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Undergraduate Research
Experiencing Diversity/Global Learning
Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
Internships
Capstone Courses and Projects
Engaging staff

A curriculum model is not enough when…

• Quality Assurance does not support or inform engaged curriculum enhancement

• Staff development does not support or encourage staff to engage intellectually in curriculum renewal

• Other stakeholders are marginalised

• Implementation is not planned, resourced and stratified (complex outcomes multi-layered strategy)

• Underlying conceptualisations remain unaddressed in policy or practice
Engaging learners
Achieving student engagement for graduate attributes

Involve students as partners in the conversations about the learning potential of university early on.

Provide engaging teaching learning and assessment experiences that make these conversations real and help students come to understand what university learning can be.

They want the same thing we want
Three messages for engaged curriculum renewal

1. Graduate attributes are complex – we should treat them that way

2. Our systems might preclude meaningful staff engagement

3. Our students care about this too, but we haven’t engaged them